

Marcel Ray Duriez

Impressions

Interval: 1 Impressions

‘There's a significant difference between falling in love and being in love.

There is a significant difference between infatuation and falling in love.’

-Phil McGraw

1

-It is beautifully, disturbing-

A FLICKER, Of LIGHT, down deep in the lake bay, Off to the side, Just barely, you can see this light, On a DEEP, DEEP, DARKNESS, a teen girl has jumped in the water, off the falling down the golden gate, over her poppy love boyfriend backing her hart, after the first time they had sex, she was bad, and he was not good, she is 12 going 13, and he is a douchebag-bag- that need not live, yet I do not want to for I can walk into the school, with all know what I did, even if, Something SHATTERING, is all I could hear after I was in the drink for a minute or two,

Noticeable, yet waterlogged, the sound was to my passing out ears; muted, I see my life flash before my eyes, I cannot quite make out, and I cannot make it stop think why I want to live now, you do not think about how much you want to live until you feel like you are going to die.

What it is saying, what is that thing saying to me, As it gets LOUDER.

And- LOUDER, and so on, When we finally, she said- Understand, little girl you are in- hazard, she said this in robot impressions, yet as hummin look as it could be in a DISEMBODIED VOICE, she looks the same as me- the same age looking at me, yet not a real-life girl- yet the body naked under all that to looks the same as me, yet all that tells the tale over her not being alive is that her eyes light up- bright blue, yet she has more feeling than I do on the inside, at that moment. DISEMBODIED- she the VOICE- HAZARD- Hazard!!!

And then I am saved by hearing and ripped out the water, before taking in too much water, in my lungs that it would be lights out for good.

I Frazeer, have come to this thought, this for I went in after the robot impressions thinking she was the one controlling her mind, telling this little girl to end it! Robot impressions now have a way to get into your head and control your mind and every thought, that you make or do, I would know, they are herring me and telling me what- I can and cannot do now even how I say this, that night after, the girl went to the ER and was said to be okay- there is FRAZEER-in his- rundown yet- cold modern- APARTMENT- FRAZEER'S FACE is distrusted over it all- seeing a young girl want to end it- and no one, but robot impressions caring- and even in that he was not sure. His eyes, snapping open, after passing out only over execution.

His face, covered in sweat, he is seeing her face over and over in his mind- and then of the other girl- who is a real girl yet not real life, think- why. Fading back,

you can see him sitting there thinking hard about life, and the imitation of life, yet to this world, it is all the same. God, they can make real-looking kids- that have more wit than I, yet, I still have to get up to take a leak he said, grown, he makes, after eating a-pp- and J you can see him lying in bed, with the hand-held hologram of the events- looking his social page seeing that his friend's list is at the lowest it's ever been- over the fact that his girlfriend is calling him crazy- to all that is a woman- and real-life- hell- he thought I could not even get a robot impressions girl to be with me now, (CRAZY BITCH) Sheets, tangled around his legs, and his boxers ripped. Alarm clock, playing something relentlessly cheerful, and he smashes it to the floor.

He Sits up, Wincing, the hologram dance in mid-air, in front of his eyes, and the thought or all the others play in his mind like a song, that will not end or stop, he/her all the thought, yet that is today's world hearing all the thoughts of everyone, can even take a shit alone, he said, that see through me, using my eyes cameras. Chatter- human and robot impressionistic chatter- children chatter- it all runs through him, that just bends his thought and his mind till it feels like scrambling.

His ARM is Unbending it feels, he reaches for a BOTTLE OF PILLS, shakes out a couple and swallows them, and takes a hand full, knowing that robot impressions would not let him pass without singing well, of death consent, for them to inject, yet that is after being a given age, for them to say you have that right too.

Trying to forget, That is all is playing over and over like a real dream, like a dream- yet, there before him to see in the back of his wondering eyes. You are in

danger, he hears it over and over, seeing her face, scared and alone. There you can see him as he rubs his hands over his face. Gets back into our bed, hoping not to live another day like that, busting is a girl-bot, to pump his gut- not asking just doing without free well, there is no well given to a citizen, not after all the war.

2

His apartment, basic, drapes moth-eaten, dark, bleak, damp, dim, holes in the walls, on by a mouse, lights flicker, would subfloors, ripped up rugs, the place on like the rest of the world, one that is still standing from the early 1800's Billian- now about 200 years old, should be ripped down, said one robot impressions, that I would not even live in this dump, Unremarkable, the stare is they give- creep like. Bearing the signs of someone who lives alone, that has lost everything along with his mind.

Shades were drawn, on-like the rest of the world everything in this dump must be down by hand, yet that is how he likes it, it reminds him of how the world was before, or even his childhood, and the flashbacks play on the full-color hologram on his wrist, screen, then back to his first love, first kiss, and first time falling in love- he was thinking- WHY...? A little messy, he wished to all that we are looking in on him, saying- do not look- on girl robot impressions said therefore no one likes you- and why you can even get a girl like me- what happened to you, the imitation of life asked.

Now he is in the- SHOWER- now MORNING, the sun rising slowly, fog burning off- in the yellowing haze- of what was once a night- light by the red glow of

all colors, and racing lights of cars, on tall soring rams, linked to high-rises, and track-less trans, on maglev, Unlike all them-FRAZEER-turns his face into the jets of water-showroom glass robot impressions looking over him in the room, not a worm- barley-hot- more like next to freaking cold.

I do not have any rights given if a robot impression wants to take over me, I do not have any say in what a robot impression gives me, or how I should live my life, it is all There' say for they think is safer this way, not to have a say. They can age you at their well and your life at their well, give you smarts and take them back at their well- without your say to do say- your life is in their hands, and they do not have hurt as you know- nothing but could and monarchical- the way it must be, I can be inside a girl at any time too even if that girl at that time is a, masturbating 10-year-old, and I feel her coming out hard and she has no idea I am there- as they say looking over the youth. And I feel all over her lower tangling, as she trembles, I feel all that is her body in mine, at any given time.

Look at this man- broken well, he is shaving with a razor.

He is using his left hand, over the one that was rebuilt- Knicks the cleft of his chin, and the blood runs. 'Shit...' walking into the KITCHEN, it still early-MORNING, the streetlight has not yet gone out.

Stare down at the two eggs in a frying pan. Waiting for it to cook over-easy.

Walking through the HALLWAY, MORNING sun rays shining in the windows that run floor to ceiling. He is now heading down the hallway. Loop-de-loop

and-a pull- he makes a knotted tie around his neck, for the day to the office. He takes a deep breath and, holds it, thinking about not letting it go- and the flashbacks start when he was a child. He kicks some neglected mail from the door and reaches for the handle and staring at him is the robot impressions mail girl saying- Hello, he does not respond. A modern, contemporary, up-to-the-minute- cold SUBURBAN STREETS like webbing- up high looking like ants below, high rise overlapping high rise, and runways- for all means of transportation. Concrete jungle, he, steps outside into the rush of all- more bots than life- scary he thought there taking over the race.

Into the flow of COMMUTERS heading for the elevated trains. Elbow to elbow- butt to butt, A river of mortality, and the smell of death, and the work dying like the sun, that has brunt way to scorching in the 50 years, that changed climate like humans, has changed some in look. FRAZEER moves along, like everyone else, not trying to stand out yet, does not blend in. Suddenly, his shoulders tense, along with the thoughts of all runs in his mind. That feeling at the back of his neck, all the non-breathing people, creeping upon him. Friendly- yet that may not be the right thing for this man, to deal with, He turns and sees, just kid robot impressions, along with real boys and girls on their way to school, the bots know more he thought- said- said only.

A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS having more than a child- at play or finding their way in life- said. Just behind him, as I said- are all these- Humanoid, and all-around above, and on the ground, in design, but still obviously, a machine, yet looks like you and I. Metal and parts on the inside, and synthetic casings covering hydraulic

muscles, on the inside, yet look like the skin on and hair on the out- like us. The thing senses his stare. Looks up with a muted HUM,

3

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS-

(Metallic voice, yet human- to a point- sweet- kind, yet wrong,)

Good day, sir, she said, Frazeeer, speeding up his pace, to get away from her, weaving through the crowd to lose the robot impressions, that is just like his childhood girlfriend, she was made to be her- after she passed her mind is in the bot- it is her- yet not in her old body- just her ways- her thoughts- her mind- in a bot body.

There is nothing like have a young girl all pressed up to you feeling her hold body and chest, I remember the first time, I was nude in a bed with a girl, and her young face was looking at me the way it did then 20 so years ago- it was wrong - the way I was feeling back now that I am older and she just a mind in a bot. I find it hard to love her - even if- she all there- yet not - yet they would say be happy what you got- and I said no. The holograms play on the wall screen, even if not asked to do so- for his amusement.

The street packed with traffic, shiny cars, that air stream in shape. Do we now comprehend this is- THE FUTURE- no...? Um- just by looking around- could heartless, lifeless, yet imitations of it everywhere. Towering apartments all over the place, he said under his breath, buildings block the sun, that so- hot it is going cold.

Just like the mom and now the fake ones like the fake plants now up in the sky that we now inhabit also, that look like earth, yet are not the same, yet we live there, I could go there if I had the money. Yet why...? This hell land is where home is to me, you look up and see lush, and down here the leftovers of what they killed.

PERAMBULATORS are wearing their computers like form-fitting portable offices. FRAZEER-throws a look at his surroundings- say- 'MY GOD.' Up high an INDUSTRIAL ROBOT IMPRESSIONS rolls down the side of a building cleaning windows, looking into a nude teen girl about 14 who is shaving her vagina, legs part-getting in there- and the look on both- is priceless- ha-um- there is still some modesty left in this world. Sorry, Miss- her green eyes- wet, and her brows bent, in mmm- and embarrassment, it said- in her internal ear- headset we all have this imparted at birth, to see and feel, and be as safe as they say- and the other chip- I shit you not the chip that runs it all is in your ass- and it all wireless- always in your head- chatter- the chatter of all, anyways he the bot looking in at this sweet thing did not stop its job. A WORK CREW of nothing but ROBOT IMPRESSIONS professionally repairs the street.

No human supervision, needed, life, and the imitation of it goes on. A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS CLEAN-UP CREW. Lumbering along the sidewalk, they are scrubbing, sweeping, and doing the grunt work, like the black would say they used to do- like me.

Emptying trash, Humanoid ROBOT:

IMPRESSIONS of those that are no longer alive, yet they are all there, yet to be soulless, impressions, of their old, and what they are not, dotting in and out of the crowd. Following their owners, and yet we do that- to keep them with us- yet they are starting to keep us. Walking slowly, intentionally, just Carrying boxes with Amazon swooshes on it with a smile, droids flay around more than birds. Groceries getting, Briefcases, holding they do all the work and all we do is sit on our butts, playing with IT, or in IT.

Some get the bots to do that for them too, with dating them, just think a girl that is made for you and what you want- and well not- GIVE YOU FREAKING FREAK SHIT! You want a rub or a dip- there more than happy to do- yet they are as real as fake can get, they even bleed, and PMS- the baby- dollie has grown up- he thought- hastily.' I thought it- pissing was cool, back in the bad, they were coming out when I was five, and got one- a girlfriend- always.' stamped on all the ROBOT IMPRESSIONS SIDES, a LOGO- ACTS SAFE, mind to mind. FRAZEER-stops to wait at a light with other WALKERS- think that what they take and give.

Directly in front of him, a LITTLE 5-year-old GIRL, with long hair down her back, clutches her father s neck, but naked, cannot afford coverings, yet the bots have more. She smiles big at Frazeer, showing off her goodies from the back to the cold world. Front teeth missing.

'Hi.' she said in baby talk,

'LITTLE GIRL' nodes,

He saw her face fad off- he -walks onward,

4

You are not allowed to talk to strangers- yet in his mind, he was chatting with the little girl like a dad to her- and a mate in a few years- it a plan he thought, he thought- so-o- she must be an awareness for now- we see- feel and corresponded someday- in the time given. Frazeer, sickened, at his mind wondering, think about her getting older- and the world, she should be dating at 7 he thought mine for the taken, and he stops looks around say 'MY GOD.' Has had enough, He steps off the curb, which is on-maned, just as,

THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL swivels around, saying go top speed and get there, Training its large digital EYE on him, yet he lost in his innocence- as he gets out now downtown- even denser. The more TRAFFIC Light's sound, crazier, yet, he was lost in the little girl, for she was not of this world yet.

Please return to the sidewalk, a bot said, 'Kiss my ass...' he said 'I do not think by law I could do that without you given rights, said the humanoid, of an older worker, 'umm' he said, FRAZEER-dodges several cars on his way across the street.

I passed a teen girl robot impression and he had red hair, she passed this year over singing out of real life, now she is an imitation of it- she had blue headphones on, big glowing green eyes with lashes, long, vary- very- pale toned skin- yet that is all that has imitation, tiny yellow hoodie, with Hello Kiddie on it, soft pink lips, and eyelids, pink, black, and white plaid skirt, a white and pink book bag.

Just bouncing along like there is nothing wrong with the world, she/her- yet, is she? Look at them with different hair colors, this one has red, from her brain scan before the end this is what she said she wanted. In two ponies, she does not look left or right, lock in 14 forever. The traffic signal, tracking him, just like the government, and all that is higher than him.

You, sir- violate city, it said in his mind over and over- stick to the ordinance 14-A-1991,

FRAZEER-throws up his hand, saying get out of my head holding a pistol to his temple, yet no one around thought this was odd, just par-for the course, in this world- that we live, Flipping it the bird just as click- SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT! It takes video of him, from above- down and around- 360, there is always an eye on you- in all places in every room, more than what is right- so much it makes your body feel as it is you of itself.

5

A teen girl- said walking by 'I bet the Chinese food here is terrible?' 'Are you a cop-?' popping gum, what...? The little girl-?

'How's your Chinese food?' she said annoyingly.

'You keep on asking about that. Can't you, tell they do not have Chinese restaurants unless you go to that part of town? Let everybody know if you are a tourist, to get mugged. Come on, he said to the girl showing her the way...'

It now later the same MORNING on the white- MONORAIL- FRAZEER- stepping onto a sleek, densely packed TRAIN, yet more imitations of life than life it is self. He Looks down at his feet, seeing his out-of-date shoe. A trampled caterpillar on the ground, he squashed, saying you are not going to be lovely either' U- DEAD.' Change into a' THEM' and he points- and all the walks that are imitations, a robot impression gets up, his hands to clean up the bug, saying that was on called for. Then he offered him his seat, do him as if he were black- and wants his rights. Frazeer, all the plant life- dying- looking out as the train moves forward, he turns his back on him, he calls himself, John, he Pulls BACK from the window to REVEAL, that fact, he wanted to see the world that, I do not care for, Looking over the CITYSCAPE 1,000 feet (about the height of the Empire State Building) or so-o up, it is so-o emotionless, unsympathetic, unemotional, unfriendly, and taciturn; amber in color MONORAIL - CONTINUOUS to push forward. The TRAIN hurtling toward INNER CITY- center.

Spiraling, gravity-defying OFFICE BUILDINGS dominate the skyline. Older buildings wedged among the new. Everything is protected by huge glass and steel shields. As we get closer congested roads, and freeways begin to disappear below ground into a series of subterranean tunnels. The old streets have become huge, spacious plazas, malls, shopping centers- schools, restraints, and shops. FRAZEER-he is moving now with the CROWD towards the doors of the aging, Police Head office- where he works. Modern accompaniments have been made to the original façade- creating an awkward architectural mess.

FRAZEER-arrives at his desk, 'The MURDER UNIT' is a vast open-plan situation room lined on one side by a series of glass-enclosed rooms. On the other side a GIANT SCREEN with real-time video of various streets and buildings. Unlike the others, it is a confused place to be. A slender computer screen curving along the front of it, you can see right through its translucent. Quite a lot of electronic messages say the same thing, and nothing of relevance...' when they are nothing but dead guys and lady's- that when have- some new life make for them if they have the money and the wish after their body has been cut open and then burnt- SEE Her- 5 - see this one 10, see this girl to 6- all dead- kids that do not matter, over the fact they just wanted out of this world and did not have the money to go out into space for a real chance!

'The MURDER UNIT' is more like the sing yourself out the program- he said, and I am sick of seeing your faces, saying they cannot take it.

~*~

Our jail was condemned this morning. He said to a girl- for touching a feeling, That is why we are bringing you all-out to the state corrections facility.

Unlock the gate! He said- to a young girl- that took it to fare with a girl on the street, getting her exposed more than law lets- for the age.

~*~

Go on through.

(Prisoner's cheer and whistle!)

Hose her down, at the end of the cage.

Photo, ID, and Number- and chip implant this time saying you are a- what you are, with the others that are mind-reading and body override- in your BUTT HOLE- just around the top of the- orifices- tween here and there miss! He spoke.

Spread, THEM...!!!

(Boss)

Ever heard the phrase lead by example, his boss said- if you do not like to do the same, you are replaceable? FRAZEER-looks up, saying ' then move me to a new department.' What? He said to her, "You stick out like a sore thumb around here-me?

What about you? I fit in better than you. At least I am wearing cowboy boots, after all that what they did back in their days. And you just shot them in the head and got it over with.

REPLACEMENT SAM DERGING stands in front of his desk, holding up a CITATION with a photo of FRAZEER-giving that traffic signal, and some young girl robot impressions the finger. Do you know what the minimum age for self-execution is in New York? - About sixteen? Freaking- Ten, this is sick, you do not make the laws- they do. He was chatting with a girl in his mind, not too, FRAZEER- It is on your badge, and this is what you trained for- so let it be. FRAZEER-takes the citation. Drops it into a drawer filled with about fifty others.

Do you know what happens in this piece?’ Yeah, I know what happened.
She said all young and prissy.’

‘There's often a big girl named- Bertha no one will mesh with. She will
protect- you like- like - if you become her sex slave and do whatever she wants, got
that kid?’

Why would they bring you in here, asked the girl she was now rooming
with?

‘I just got in.’

‘I asked for the new girl, and they gave me you.’

‘And they brought me here.’

Hey, he is sleeping ‘... huh? Cute Little girl.

‘Four to one room?’

‘Yah!’

You know, I will just start with you.

‘Let her sleep a little bit.’

‘- Look, I don't want to do this.’

‘- Hey, I don't blame you at all for their girlies.’

‘If I were in your situation, I would want to get through this -whole- thing, ,As quickly and with as little pain as possible, popping it in and out.’

‘So-o tries our best to make it a modest- little- sweet- in-and-out procedure, with you and me and her.’

What is the matter? Her face horrid, and her knees knocking!

Relax, lessen, hands-on the girl’s shoulders.

We should spend like a twosome or threesome of minutes together- like before we get well to it.

You know, to get acquainted before, get all screwed.

‘ - What's wrong with you?’

‘ - I don't want to do this.’

‘Hell, I understand, but what are your alternatives?’

‘My alternatives?’

‘To what?’

‘To you?’

‘I do not know. Madness. death- hugging, cutting.’

Look, it is either me or them, You are getting' fucked in the puss, one way or the other.

Hey, hey, hey. She jumps up on her knees,

‘Lighten up, OK-ay?’

‘Don't worry, I'm going to keep you.’ G-ee, thank you.

Excuse me, but I think a modicum of gratitude would not be out of Line
here...?

‘- You think I should be glad?’

‘- Yes. I mean it is your puss, not mine.’ ‘I think you should be glad.’

I think you should be down on your f*ckin' knees.

I did not know your visit was such an honor.

‘I'm doing' a favor.’

‘Like- you're getting' me for nothing‘... you little shit.’

‘Girl, that's one hell of self-worth you've got.’

‘What the hell is your problem?’

‘- I did not come here just to get rubbed off.’

‘- No. No, nopper.’

‘I'm not fingering you off.’

‘I'm not doing anything.’

‘You're on your own.’

‘I’m just taking care of Sleeping Beauty.’

‘- Hey! girl.’ vagina slap-

‘- Back off.’

‘Hey...’

You know her, she said ‘yeah- she’s my old girlfriend from high school, I thought you were dead, nope started over and it did not go well, even if someone else is in my old body.’ I am here because of a body transfer. I did not do anything, yet it all a plan,

(Here and now)

DREDGING, the traffic division filed an official complaint this morning.

FRAZEER, the traffic division is a machine, just like what that girl became.

Look, I know there is going to be an adjustment period, Sell, whit it, with you- her and the dying world.

FRAZEER- (disturbing)

‘I’ll send them a letter of apology, to your ma- for you crying at work.’

Some flowers. A box of chocolates, and your head in a box, at the door, if you do not shut that hole in your face and sell...’ JUST THEN Frazeer’s phone 20 RINGS. He

throws Dredging a look at it and them. Then snatches up the receiver, that built into his ear, and takes the call. 'Murder...' FRAZEER-speaking!

7

An ad for *Chatubate* is running asking for young girl models, to make the only entertainment in the town, with the sexy young ladies on it, that makes you feel the simulations of them, though your body, as you see them spread, if you want to or not you feel them- all of them, sex is all people think about anymore- God, and he was whom?

U.S.A imitations of life- ESTABLISHING - DAY an extensive glass and metal complex covering many city blocks. The entrance is a large plaza filled with PEOPLE and ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, that look just like you and me. He thought- 'Essentially, I have two speeds, Hostile or smart-ass. Your choice.'

The U.S.A. Impastation's- shinny COPPER PASSAGE, though the budding its - DAY 14, of the month, yet you must look at your phone to know that also, for were all so dumbed down, over government control. An elevator opens with a hiss, and there is FRAZEER-and he steps out into a featureless corridor. 'The humorous thing about facing imminent death is, that it certainly snaps the whole shebang of everything that is else into perspective.'

'A friend of mine once well-defined love as finding someone, that you can talk to late into the night.' Hell, I can get a robot impression to do that for me now.

His footsteps, echoing, in the long yet vast spaces, that are unsympathetic and modern. He stops at a set of DIFFERING DOORS.

He just looks over at one, when the other suddenly OPENS, to his thoughts, as if it could read his mind and like it and all in this world at any time it could. Pushing and shoving into the CONFERENCE ROOM, INCESSANT, a heartfelt, mahogany-paneled room, with LED lighting, emotionless, feeling. In sharp dissimilarity, unlike the taciturn metal space outside. FRAZEER-steps inside the room and slams his ass into a set hard, at the end of a long conference table sits an Older MAN, with Glistening blue eyes, that are next to death, and lost in time with his style wearing an old-fashioned suit, tie.

Hello, there, Please come in, said the Older GENTLEMAN!

FRAZEER-hesitates,

‘It’s all right.’

FRAZEER-

(interested)

Are you offering me a cup of coffee?

‘Would you like some- coffee?’

‘Sure-’

FRAZEER-does not look left or right, or around the room at all.

The older Man lifts a coffee pot, for the robot impressionistic dispenser.
Pour some coffee into a single cup, which is what he did with his hand weak and shaking.

‘Yes- yes- yes...’ he said over and over lost in his crazy.

Nevertheless, you are to say, ‘no, thank you...’ to me right- over the trust.

FRAZEER-nods a little. The elder man raises the coffee to his lips but does not take a swallow yet.

He sits it down- to a thought,

‘As you wish, friend- I do not give two shits- I- trust ‘till not- so-o.’

He does not move,

‘Oh my...’

‘Um...’

There is no movement except for a whisper of steam rising, from the coffee cup, in his shaking hand giggling about; following the same trail.’ Do you want to tell me something about Dr. Smith?

,And, About your upcoming death, of old age?

The longstanding man smiles, happy with his life, and what he has done.

I understand that your planed death is at the end of the month- (considers, it what his to be done with me,)

What do you want me to do with you? -Nothing specifically, just take over what I did with the imitations, they were my life and my kids. FRAZEER-shifts his weight, from one butt cheek to the other. Nervous about the thought of nothing but robot impressions taking over the world, with no life behind it. Under normal circumstances that would not be enough to get you to investigate, sir, yet I must cover the fact you want robot impressions to do your life's work.

‘But this is not normal?’

,circumstances, is it, Investigator FRAZEER-is it?

‘No! It is not, ,you are so brilliant, I can see you doing something so foolish.’

Frazeer's losing his patience, said come on, this is the world and babies and kids, and you are going to sell them out, to immersions.

JUST THEN the HOLOGRAM of DR. SMITH vanishes in a burst of LIGHT ONE WEEK HAS PAST SENSES, as does the table, the coffee pot, and the conference room, SHOW NOTHING BUT EMPTINESS, AND A CHAIR. Frazeer, suddenly finds himself standing in- in front of a LARGE VIEW SCREEN inside a SMALL METAL CHAMBER, This WAS HIS LAST THOUGHTS AND WISHES. NOW ON THE HALLWAY, in a car that is driving itself - middle, DAY even if there

is not much sun, shine, FRAZEER-steps out into the hallway and into, AN
BODYGUARD that also is a girl ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

Please follow me. BODYGUARD ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, My God he
said, in his thoughts.

FRAZEER-unenthusiastically starts to follow it.

Passes another doorway were the

CONSTABULARIES see thought TAPE, that is also a hologram is
stretched across it. Catches a brief sight of,

DR. SMITH'S BODY, laying a plastic box off to be burnt, his eyes still
open.

U.S.A imitations - COMPANY BOARDROOM - DAY with only
imitations of life, and I- myself.

Two large doors emblazoned with the LOGO opens automatically, yet that
everything in this world god forbids that you get off your lazy ass.

Inside, an enormous glass-enclosed boardroom looking out over the entire
complex, up scary high. FRAZEER-walks through the doorway, looking baffled. His
escort automaton trailing behind him, more alive than- he. An army of corporate types
sits around a discussion table. Young- Energetic, they are, and oh so cold and to the
point, yet, right in their wrong to me. As if- you can practically feel the wits and desire.

FRAZEER- 'Usually, I ask who's in charge, yet I can see that is no one...'

'Hmm- they say, we as the new board are here sir...'

Frazeer's eyes lock with an imitation of a MAN sitting at the head of the table. Handsome, charismatic, to him yet saying whip the smear off his face and show respect.

'The hell with you-you're just robot impressions...'

'I am now the CEO whether you like it or not.'

I smile, saying sure Sunnie sure you are.

Pretends to coach his individuals, as to why- yet they do not see.

Looking back on the motion picture of the doctor, it is slow appearances that show him slipping. Remind me to cut back on my talk, that these are his wishes.

LAUGHTER starts within them of me.

They say to me- 'Welcome to our systematic ways of the world...'

Private detective, I for one regret you are not visiting us under more agreeable joyous environments. Allow me to introduce Mr. McGraw, our head of Legal Affairs, over yet- Sell...!'

'Hmm...! A precipitately graying MAN, that was just made for the job the day before is saying this to me, leaning against the wall. He Nods, like a diplomat hello, there.

(More like a dipshit) my thoughts and they no, they no,

The one over here the gentleman to my right is Dr. Slfiled Lanning, Director of Research, also over you- do you hear me- and the pints, pounding my chest. Slfiled Lanning, only one there in a tie. I just Nod, smiling like a dumb ass, to their preeminence.

They will be accessible to answer any questions you might have during your examination.

You will understand how anxious we are to resolve this matter, especially before the press gets wind of it. There are some anti-robot impressions sentiments out there as you know, Dick, and we are not eager to stir them up. So-o, where would you like to begin?

I, can begin and get done with this BS, with whether the old man put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger, or he passed of old age, you were handed this with you being made the day before overall them down there- them being life, how do you feel- or can you?

A profound wave of tension shoots through the assemblage.

MCGRAW- Sir- You do not have to answer that, or anything you have be overruled, by us, and it in symbols, and text and coded in our brains, as yours- do not overstep.

SHEVELET- waves me off as if I am a young punk.

SHEVELET- You can assist us here, and if not, there the door.

All and sundry look down at the other end of the table.

A-BEAT, then an attractive young girl gets to her feet, also not alive.

FAITH HELLEN-. Hair untucked by her ears. Looking at everyone but Frazeeer, she had no time.

HELLEN- Dr. Smith was a schizoid disposition who eschewed community dealings.

Rejecting individuals in favor of solitary events involving machines.

He spent all his time at the lab here or his lab at home, I was there you were not- you were not even thought of yet.

As a result, he was highly susceptible to depression, yet you do not see- you see nothing as I do.

9

Dr. HELLEN- is our Chief Psychologist, she knows more than you well ever- sir and yes, she was made to in a day- before you say it. FRAZEER- If that was your diagnosis, why did you not see this coming, then you do not know as much as you think you do. HELLEN- turns to his look. Finally meeting Frazeeer's eye, saying what if I were meant to fall in love with you what would you say or do? I would say BS; I would never fall for your type. I feel the same about you.

ELLEN- This is U.S.An Imitations AKA DICK, um- Detective, if you can give that name, or title to some so vulgar.

Eighty-five percent of our employees fit that portrayal- does it not.

KANNING- (interceding)

You will have to excuse the doctor.

We are all a little on edge.

This has been a difficult and emotional morning.

FRAZEER-throws a look around the room.

Then back at HELLEN- 'Yeah...' he said.

'I can see You're all broken up, just like you can see us, really caring.'

SHEVELET- responds to Frazeer's skepticism, saying something we could not repeat- it was stricken for the record.

SHEVELET- Dr. Smith was at my side from the very beginning of this company, I may not have been there, yet we share minds. We developed the Acts of imitation together. But then again, these days science is a young man's game. By the time you hit thirty your best years are behind you, we will be here doing this, and you will be ash- and pissed on.

Some of us are kicked upstairs, to become one of us if they have the money, and now we feel the need- be- we- or us.

Others I am afraid and' so lucky.

SHEVELET- stands- then bowing,

This Meeting is now over and final.

I did not say, All their hand makes a shushing finger of their lips, such, you do not have a say... '!

He walks out not looking or shaking a hand, they are not real, there is no disrespect there.

Piss on that shit- he said going down the hall,

I must look more into this and look at the steamy dump this man gives me now, to suck it up and deal with.

10

SHEVELET- Dr. Smith took his own life, it was said to us, if you like that or not also, so we could be here, Detective. Dr. Swon will make himself obtainable if you have any further questions. I trust you will come to the same swift conclusion, FRAZEER-looks over at HELLEN.

FRAZEER- HELLEN, was unhappy with this arrangement.

HELLEN- I want her to help me. That is not my department,

SHEVELET- (pointed) METAL HALLWAY is all you can see for what looks like forever - Faith would be happy to aid you. Besides with a gesture, SHEVELET- dismisses everyone.

People start getting up, assembly up and gathering their things, filling out. Faith HELLEN-. The last one to get up. FRAZEER-and HELLEN, heading down the same hallway he was in beforehand, or formally. Catch sight of a couple of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS TECHNICIANS, make more robot impressions imprisons.

FRAZEER- Ah, Christ, Toasters, that what they all are, and freaking can openers- one pops and the other skews off- ha, (under his breath, he giggles.) As they duck under the police tape and, some of the girls in the room ran at friar of him, and his look, and his look. , enter SMITH'S lab, with me and she, the girl that is the head of the psycho- crap. Alive with activity. LAWBREAKING ACT EXPERTS, ITINERANT INVESTIGATION COMPONENTS. Rays of beams SCANS, running across,

SMITH'S LIFELESS FACE is shown to all that want to see that have worked for him, like a wake, yet not, more demining than anything to me, nude- always nude- to she died they say, and what an imitation- we never have to the full. Fanning out around his contorted lips is bluing. Everywhere, they are- everywhere- I throw a look around the lab- imitations. Mostly incomplete, UPPER BODY, ARMAMENTS, FORELEGS, Floppy from the ceiling, Passes them by, A SERGEANT, that passed me.

SERGEANT #1 and Sargent #2- They say the price's going to come down a- lot next year.

Cool, huh? The one said that the other, like robot impressions- ha, yet they are that- wah-a?

Oh my, I thought- without really thinking.

I know I am so mortified!

And holding my birth without resizing! Like them, their chests never- ever move, creepy.

HELLEN- Detective? Is everything all right?

'Um- No.'

'Oh- my...'

How cool will it be when one takes your job, I thought yet she heard in her brain. I pushed past her. Her eyes, darting around the room not looking at me, were so disrespectful- I thought to try not to for she can hear my thought like they and them- and you are too.

11

(Forward a week)

I got a new girl this week age 10, and she wants death to come, by injection, over this- and I must sign her out, so she becomes imitation, where there is no

harassment. A girl-on-girl case, of young lust- hum, it is- her wish I must obey-no?
come on sweaty were going to take you under, and she marches in the room naked as
the day she was born 10 years ago, and robot impressions, odds on (Xights)- robot
impressions to whip out life in a human way her, young body, and take her awareness
that is all of her they say and puts into the imitation, for that real life. Then all that is
here is downloaded to a chip and placed in the new body, and the old one piss on, and
brut, and made ash for the roads or something like that, she did not have the money to
be shot light-years out into space at only 10, and mom dad, give in before she was 5,
so-o we wonder- right?

(Reading the reports)

(See was crushing on this girl, right boss?)

Boardroom with the time, of 50 or so in the department -Her- Ella, that is
what she wants to go with here- well call her this name 'Just want to no- like now or
back in the day could marcel and you have dated or had sex together at some point.'

The girl' Never. And never would.'

(This is what ends real life)

(Board- so-o)

'Keep reading!'

She like a girl that is a mom over she could not get a significant other or
girlfriend- (gay girl) over her bad rep. or something guys.

-AND-

They said on the board.

‘So, she gets a No.’

(So-o)

Reading- ‘...You have 3 kids, and lay on your backside for anyone, and you can be nice to me who the hell do you think you are...’ (Okay- who is she)

‘What?’ They said,

Read guys for one, I have two kids, to the same person. Also, my life is not your business, 😊 I was with the same person for three years, so, I do not need you to ask me, who I am. Secondly, I do NOT lay on my back for anyone.



Who I have slept with, when I have slept with and currently sleeping with, wouldn't it be your business anyway? And be nice to you? You just asked a female if she would have sex with you?

So, I do not know WHO the hell you think YOU are. You know they make a store with toys if you have sexual desires. I can give you the address if you like. 🧑

Well, isn't that just something a gentleman would say to a lady? What is wrong with you?

☹ Do you have some serious issues? Isn't that- consider being sexual assault? Saying such vulgar things to a female?

(When you are nothing but wrong)

The board- (We know this one and she up to old tricks no, let her go, she a waste of life.)

Considered- they say- we well, it is her wish and law say we can stop her if she has the money for death, or we see the need and the city see's the need too- end of the story. This is a mistrial, I said throwing up my hands, she a kid- a child! What wrong with you all,

Read- they say- with rolling eyes and no time- and I care fewer attitudes to her and her story-

'...There is no law online or on Facebook to stop this shit isn't that some carp, hey look, you know we have been friends for years, and I know you and your family, you have done well for what you have gone through, I thought, I just need to know where I stand, is that okay, do you get what I am saying, for not Stacy would get what I am saying we have chatted over the years, about me and my life, in the town and just like you it not to nice, we all need love no?'

'Stacy is the girl?'

'Dumb shit- it's her sibling- see what I am saying- here...'

‘...And you’re going to- kill her...?’

Read- they said- and they do and their tablets-‘...Uhm, I have said, ‘hi’ to you. We have never had anything other than that. I am not interested in you. And yes, there is a law, and that's harassment, and my family would put your ass on blast for talking to me with such disrespect! 😊 ,So good luck. And love? 😊 -wtf.’

(True- true- they said all shitting thought the same hole-)

Ella’s friends then?’

‘Absolutely, not and I’m good...’

‘Why?’

She asked here,

‘I don't want to be...’ smart like, she said to her.

(AND) ,get on with it, you are wasting our time.

Stop talking to me.

Board- And she did not so she is right for saying it harassment- no?

‘Me- are you freaking kidding me...’

‘That enough out you and your belligerences...’

U-ah and make a retard- hand gesture, smacking his chest!

‘...That is nice for someone that loves God so- to push others away...’

‘God is not a real thing- man...’

I said’ M-mm I forgot that he was still hanging on a stick somewhere, for you to shove your dick into- right, that only way you think someone is alive and real these days, is if you can do just that.’

(Glaring and stern looks he gets by the board.)

‘And that's nice for someone who loves God to say such messed up shit.’

(STOP)

‘Huh? 🤔 sex before marriage is a sin, isn't it?’

...?... Blank looks by some,

‘Christ, yeah- that all kids know how to do!’

Blink- Blink- Blink- is all they did,

‘Love that you say his name yet don’t know what it stands for, people.’ I said, fast.

Talking profound is a sin, please learn the Bible, and- and- also. I do not claim to follow the Bible. You know nothing about me.

(That is not what her dad preaches, or what the school would say in their reports.)

I will pray for you, was said, 'hoo- a- tha- ah-ar-a team-om-a- whom-a lay-sha-ma-ha...' and he raised his hands to the cling.

'...Okay, that's enough, and I pull my gun, to his face saying, I'll blow your fucking head off!'

(Oh my!)

They were all mortified.

The Hammer fall- saying I have the floor- sit!

(READ)

'...And who is to say, like- it could not go there, I do not think, yet, if I were a football play or someone, that would be a dick to you would fall all over it?' ,Would you not, if you would let yourself get to know someone before- arbitrating, judging, mediating, and labeling them, and have some thought behind it; (and yours only) of your own to make an educated opinion, you, and these girls around here, that think their ass is hot when it is not, would not end up crying over ass that just does not respect them- like you.'

(She has a point here, said one.)

Yawing, by others, not wanting to hear it.

(That is not saying anything to me)

'That's over the fact you're a dumb shit!'

Read- 'I am not out to do anyone harm, I love everyone and anyone for whom they are.

'You know that...'

'I am straight...'

'Yet, you're here and so am I...'

'I know that one was in question...'

'What is wrong with this town?'

(See- see- blaming us- when it is her- that is OH SO-O wrong.)

'...And the people we do not change their simpleminded mentality, toward what they do not understand, and they do not want to understand me, and do not want to then, so shut up...'

'...About me them right...'

'I say missed of crap?'

'Well, it got you to chat no...?'

'I am with you, but come on we all know, that you did that don't lie, the sex before, and yes it a sin, yet then that why we have Jesus, to forgive- no?' '...and even so, life is too short when you are young to think about that too- right?'

'I have girl, I have read the New Testament, and have a college background in it more than you, and I am very sure of it...'

(So-o yet again,)

(None of these matters, yet you get a boyfriend that is here saying slurs, that is simple, protecting something he does not care about either so why is he doing that...?)

(Why do they care?)

Read- 'I don't need to know anything about you- a girl!'

'...See this is how this works, 'Hi' 'Hi' - 'I think you're cool.' 'You do-?'
'Ah- thanks' yah- want to chat- sure, (want to talk about things? 'Um- sure'), and you freaking get to know them...'

'You're missed up for saying- that- I am- missed up, before getting to know someone, you have to try, you don't what to do that, so why- do you feel as you do?'

'...And do not give me slurs, say why...'

(The WHY ???)

'I am a girl- with all that comes with being a girl, what have, I did I do, in my life of to you that is so wrong, that- I have to be pushed out?'

'All you girls say the same shit and say nothing, saying it.'

'Just say what it is, that I have done, to be so disrespected...'

‘Also- by all the girls in this town, and by some like them- and the likes of you, and do not say it now, I went about starting this chat, with you; it was just seeing, what you would say, and I am sorry for that, I knew- that you should get it, if not think about it.’

‘...No pick in it was going there with bowing space jets.

Tell me the way, in more than a fragment, and I will say goodbye.’

‘I do not have to explain myself to you. And yes, I am WAY too good for you and yes, I am a pretty girl. And please go learn how to spell and use grammar. Because you make no sense.’

‘So, you think that you are being used up, is too hot for me, you think that- so where do I stand with my girl, selections- you tell me, where I rank...’

‘You asked me to have sex! I never came to you, never messaged you. (Because I would not), and I am not a high school dropout. lol, I have my diploma. You rank, nowhere!’

‘On a scale of 1-10,. you are like -100.’ 😊

(So- you all wonder why- I get it I have done here,)

This was hers, and I keep it her bracelet with her name.

12

(Back)

Yeah, I said, along with oh my, and the thoughts of how horrified, like- I was to all and everything. This is just how- um like- that- I like my robot impressions in smithereens. As they approach Smith's body, the lead WRONGDOING ACT SLEUTH, BLADES, get up to meet them.

'Can you believe this, man?'

What?

'Can you believe this shit?'

'Excuse me...' and he snaps his wrist, by twisting- you no shit about this man- a good man!

'Now go fix that...'

U.S.An Imitations, I did not think, I would ever see the inside of this building, back then. #2 Hands Frazee, a plasma clipboard. FRAZEER-signs it, awkwardly. With his LEFT HAND,

FRAZEER- What is the run-down?

BALDEZ- Smith, sixty-five years old. The weapon a small caliber .23, registered in his name, was death we said to them, all of them down there. Looks like he walked in, locked the door, and snuffed himself out, and that is what is going to be reported under-stood, and we are running this now- and well keep doing so-o it was in his well to do so-o.

I started, cocking up blood, his head turned to look at Smith's face, one last time on the hologram screen. I said I know someone who disagrees with you, BALDEZ Who? all- him- is this one here- me- pointing to himself- he was.

I then stand up,

Pointing down at Smith, he was- oh- me.

Him- man 1, said, that is a nobody, and he points to me, that is someone.

'I see this all play out, they're showing this...' I said, 'okay' ,And 1, 2, and 3, the guy is stepping over the body, leaving a confused, miss- Baldez. Stepping deeper, into the lab, HELLEN- Following, saying it is all staged, get the unmanned news here.

'I spoke to a dead man today...' I said- we chatted, over his broken wrist, that he got somehow, it was bike riding, or doing his mom- something like that. Want to tell me about that? I just did,

(Eyes roll)

Therefore, you get paid here; an old friend slaps him on the back.

...Drop,

'We are backbit CPUs, so we no more than you will ever...' said the one Imitation.

HELLEN- Dr. Smith's hologram took his appointments. Attended staff meetings. He hated corporate life. The hologram enabled him to focus on his work. It is just a device, Detective.

FRAZEER- 'A device that called the police is this thing here, well I feel safe.'

HELLEN- 'The sound of the gunshot would have retriggered a 911.'

FRAZEER- 'Nevertheless, the call came in a straight line to me.'

HELLEN- 'We are talking about a mechanism designed by Smith to say provocative things. To aggravate and confound his colleagues.'

FRAZEER- 'Besides that's what you think it is?'

HELLEN- 'I am sorry, but this whole examination is the result of a dead man's toy messing with your head, such as you. They pass half a robot impression, hanging from a hook, saying this is one that they rebelled on today over you and all this leaking. FRAZEER-curls his lip swivels the robot impressions' head so-o it is not looking at him, saying it needs to be said.'

FRAZEER- When was the last time any of you spoke to Smith? I mean human to human. You said what to do- and he did not?

'So-o we, need to do what?'

'I say- push him out!'

HELLEN- 'I couldn't say- yah- or nay.'

HELLEN- 'I don't guess, Investigator, is going to try.'

'Nonetheless, if pressed, I would purpose it had been a sizable length of time.'

'Oh- my!'

13

How well did you know him?

HELLEN- Gently swivels the robot impressions head back to where it had been.

HELLEN- Not well, But I admired his work tremendously.

FRAZEER-studies her for a beat. Then he turns back to the body. Two CORONERS entering with a high-tech body box.

I get the whole mad scientist thing. Smith was past his prime. Isolated. Eccentric. He enters a room. Locks the door and is found minutes later with a bullet fired through his mouth into his brain. Everything about this case says suicide.

So- That was the story stick to it, so there is no panic!

HELLEN- You do not sound convinced.

The coroners start loading the body into the box.

FRAZEER- 'Even people who live a life of logic and precision rarely arrange their deaths so flawlessly.'

(Turning to her, looking just looking- intently.)

What all this is missing - is behavior, As he starts for the door, he thought this and was acting it all out, over, and over in his mind. Do you have 24-hour surveillance? And so, can they, why are they all so dumb down there, 'MY GOD.' Just Corked-MEDIA, that is all! All along METAL HALLWAY, this thing that records, shows all and everything to all in their minds at any time - CONTINUOUS, there is no stopping it. They- we- us, head out into the hallway, and see what has taken place, given time back in playback, in our heads. A MECHANICAL DOOR GUARD systematically into place behind them.

HELLEN- 'It's company policy.'

FRAZEER- 'I want to see the tapes.'

HELLEN- hurrying to keep up with him. This is hardly how she wanted to spend her morning.

Calls out into the air,

HELLEN- Bill!

Two small slits grow into ROUND BLACK

EYES, and a thin mouth expands into an ENORMOUS SMILE. At the end of the corridor, near the elevator, a BRIGHT CIRCLE appears. Hovering just in front of the wall. HELLEN, said to Detective, meet Bill. Our building's supercomputer. He is the checks and balances of U.S.I.

(To Bill-)

Bill, Detective Frazee's heading up the investigation into the death of Dr. Smith.

Bill smiles big, Frazee, furrows his brow. 'You look like a very, glad interactive computer...' he said.' Bill responds in a GENTLE MALE VOICE- BILL 'Thank you.' 'That's exceedingly kind of you to say.'

HELLEN- The Detective needs to see our security tapes.

The elevator doors open at once with a whoosh. They step inside, at the same time even in step with one another.

14

Now at the ELEVATOR, the elevator stops, the doors open. A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS stepson.

FRAZEER- and HELLEN- descend. Bill floats on the wall and smiles wide. FRAZEER- looks back at it, and with a frown.

A- ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- imitation-

‘Good day, Dr. HELLEN-. Good day, sir.’

Frazeer’s jaw clenches up some as he is staring at the Robot impressions that have taken over, it senses the stare and then turns back to him ever so-o.

A- ROBOT IMPRESSIONS’ May I be of service to you, sir?’

Frazeer. Breaks the stare. Ignoring the Robot impressions. HELLEN, she Looks over at him.

HELLEN- Aren't you going to answer him?

FRAZEER- I do not talk to my refrigerator, either, yet it wants to know all about my life too, as do you, it has the same mind that links to mine too, what do you say about that?

HELLEN- folds her arms at that very moment.

HELLEN- I get a distinct feeling You are one of those people, Detective.

FRAZEER- What people?

HELLEN- Those who do not appreciate the work we do here at U.S.I.

FRAZEER- You people do what you do. Then it is up to the rest of us to make sense of the world we wake up in.

As the elevator doors open on to, now we are in the ATRIUM LOBBY - all this stuff- for a lack of a better word just keeps going and CONTINUOUS, A soaring lobby. The centerpiece is a five-story STATUE of a ROBOT IMPRESSIONS

imitation, arms outstretched in an approximation of Da Vinci's Study of Man. Robots impressions workers more than humans. They are sleeker. Finer, more advanced than those in the outside world.

HELLEN- and FRAZEER-head across.

HELLEN- When this company started, we manufactured three robot impressions a week.

Now, look at us. Today's children will never know a world without robot impressions.

FRAZEER- The streets are filled with unemployed humans who are not exactly thrilled with that idea, now are they?

HELLEN- Our robot impressionistic systems maintain factory inventories, regulate street traffic - even run the family home, 'not mine, that's why I live in the dump.'

'I see...' she said.

Me' All life in this one- lady, all.'

FRAZEER- Leaving people to do what, Doctor?

HELLEN- Leaving people to engage in higher chases that make life worth living.

FRAZEER- ,And what happens when something goes wrong?

HELLEN- Our system's never- EVER- EVER- NEVER- EVER- wrong-
LIKE YOU THAT IS, ALWAYS.

As they walk through the crowd, we hear the quiet WHIR of robot
impressions heads as they turn in succession to watch FRAZEER- pass.

SUPERCOMPUTER - DIURNAL, FRAZEER-and HELLEN- enter the
MAINFRAME of U.S.A- IMPRESSIONS- Robot impressionistic. This is the nerve
center of the whole operation. Walls lined with COMPUTERS, SCREENS, and
thousands of CONTROLS.

HELLEN- This is Bill's home, she said formally and to the point, as she did
in most conversations.

BILL, he appears on a wall-sized SCREEN broken up into beehive-like
components.

BILL- I will now play you the last thirty-two seconds of Dr. Smith's life.

AS WE WATCH THE SCREENS. The elevator opens and DOCTOR
SMITH' Steps into the metal corridor. FRAZEER-watches the lab doors open to admit
him. SMITH Steps in. The doors slide closed behind him. In countless ANGLES.
High, low, close-up, wide. Smith's face is composed but close-fitting. Then a muffled
GUNSHOT all over the place. Nothing for a few moments, then more.

HELLEN- jumps, startled. That is, the cameras that are robot
impressionistically contoured to their thing, still trained in the corridor.

FRAZEER- Where is the tape from inside?

BILL- Dr. Smith did not permit cameras to witness him while working.

HELLEN- That was only within the last year.

FRAZEER- So, we can throw paranoia into the mix.

(To Bill)

Fast-forwarding.

A hundred-plus screens all FAST-FORWARD. POLICE OFFICERS appear and force open the doors. Now TECHNICIANS appear and rush through in a blur,

HELLEN- Um. I hate to be a stickler,

On-screen, we see FRAZEER- and HELLEN- enter the lab.

HELLEN- But don't killers usually have to enter and exit the scene of a crime?

FRAZEER- Stop the recording here.

FRAZEER-turns away from the footage and then stares at HELLEN.

FRAZEER- They do, Doctor. Unless they have always been there - and never- ever left.

HELLEN- looks at him, trying to understand, yet he does not get wrong.

HELLEN- You think the murderer was in the lab the entire time.

FRAZEER- If I am right, it is still there,

FRAZEER- turns back to the screens to see it more.

The IMAGE paused at the exact moment; the MOTORIZED GUARD zipped in front of the lab door.

FRAZEER- We just locked it in, with us, and it was on, so on. COPPER CORRIDOR - DIURNAL. The laboratory doors slide open, and the STEEL ARMS, which is not skinned with the stuff puss- puss is made, is hanging there, of the ROBOT IMPRESSIONS GUARD retracts with a CLANG, too.

SMITH'S LAB - DAY, FRAZEER-and HELLEN- step inside. It is dark and oh so incredibly quiet. Constabularies and technicians long are gone. Silhouettes of hanging limbs, with eyeless heads. Clumps of wire and metal and the skins fell like a young hairless pussy. The LIGHTS flicker on, HELLEN- sees FRAZEER-reaching into his coat with his left hand, and pulling out a GUN, Responds.

‘What?’

‘I have had my share of hairless pussy! Girl!!’ ‘YUM- yum.’ She spoke.

HELLEN- The Initial Act of Robot impressionistic forbids this. Besides, we hardwire the newer ones to these bots have Acts into every model, so something like this could never- ever. Without exception, first.

‘A robot impression cannot harm a human being, Detective.’

‘I don’t give a shit what you say they're taking over!’

FRAZEER- Yeah, I saw the commercial.

FRAZEER-startles, as the metal, bug scurries through the corridors. Clamps his hand down on it. FRAZEER-steps deeper into the lab. Eyes scanning, twisting, and the robot impressionistic eye that runs in his mind was recessing, the one that links to all the others so they can see what he sees. To avoid touching any robot impressions parts.

Passes a MAZE holding a METAL INSECT. SUDDENLY. The bug HUMS to life.

15

FRAZEER- And if a robot impression was given a direct order to kill?

HELLEN- The Act of Robot impressionism would prevent it. Robot impressions must obey an order only if it does not conflict with the first law.

FRAZEER-approaches a MOUND of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS PARTS, arms, and legs, naked bodies and pussy showing their holes, all over like freaking, half torsos all over. All tossed haphazardly onto the pile.

FRAZEER- But robot impressions can defend themselves.

HELLEN- Only when that action does not conflict with the Initial or Following Commandments. This is the Act of imitations.

FRAZEER- Yes, well, you know what they say - Acts are made to be broken.

HELLEN- Not these, ones.

Frazeer, He starts nudging the pile with his shoe. HELLEN- growing impatient,

HELLEN- You are not hearing me, Detective.

There is nothing here,

WHEN SUDDENLY- the PILE ERUPTS in front of Frazeer, Parts flying, AS A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS LEAPS UP FROM BENEATH IT!,

Frazeer, knocked back, his GUN, skittering across the floor, right to, HELLENS FEET.

FRAZEER- said Dr. HELLEN-!

HELLEN-. Stunned. Speechless. Robot impressions. Fixing his ILLUMINATED EYES. Right on her. She steps forward,

FRAZEER- Goddammit! Stay back!

Frazeer- Scrambling towards his gun. HELLEN.

Reaching out towards Robot impressions,

HELLEN- Calm down, Detective, There is no hazard here,

Frazer. Grabbing up his gun and wheeling round just as,

HELLEN- (to Robot impressions)

De-Activate.

And the robot impressions, Suddenly it FREEZES about.

Frazer, Heart POUNDING hard you could see it. Get to his feet. Training the gun on Robot impressions. HELLEN- turns to him.

HELLEN- How did you know it was under there?

FRAZEER- If I were metal and did not want anyone to find me, I would hide under a pile of junk.

HELLEN- This Robot impression was not hiding. You are looking at it is the result of clever programming. The illusion of self-interest and free will.

Nothing more- nothing.

Frazer. Stepping closer to the Robot impressions. Cautiously.

Holstering his gun. As HELLEN- turns for the door.

HELLEN- I am going to get Dr. Swon,

, THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS S HAND SUDDENLY SHOOTS OUT,

And grabbing Frazier's gun, from his holster,

LIGHTENING FAST,

I am, Pointing it,

,Right back at him,

CLOSE ON HELLEN-

Cannot believe this is happening,

HELLEN- I said- De-Activate!

FRAZEER- Move away from the door, Doctor.

HELLEN's voice said.

Cracking from desperation.

The confusion was all around and sitting in.

HELLEN- Commence emergency shut-down!

FRAZEER- Now!

Frazeer is staring into the Robot impressions eyes.

A thin bead of SWEAT and is Trickling down his temple, and in his eyes
and he rubs. HELLEN- she is now moving away from the door,

HELLEN- I, , I, gave you an order,

The robot impression,

It- it- starts backing towards the door.

The gun,

Shaking in its hand,

As if she is desperate, conflicted.

She touches the WALL PANEL,

The doors slide open, for the Robot impressions girl, and she steps out into the metal corridor hallway. Turning to RUN as the doors begin to shut,

Frazeer. Reaching down to whip out a BACK-UP GUN. From an ankle holster. Slapping in a LARGE CARTRIDGE.

HELLEN- This is impossible. Robot impressions,

FRAZEER- ,Cannot do that, Yes, yes, I know.

HELLEN- My God- did you see how it moved?

I've never- ever seen an impression of life move that way,

It starts running for the door.

HELLEN- Wait!

Please, you cannot destroy her, she is just too lovely. We must study for her,

FRAZEER- That thing took my gun.

You will be lucky if you get a handful of bolts back!

SLAMS! Slams the wall panel and,

(METAL CORRIDOR)

,Sprints out into the hallway, The robot impressions Suspect, About to turn
to the corner,

BILL, Suddenly appearing.

BILL- The suspect is nearing the end of the hallway, detective.

FRAZEER- Gee, thanks.

FRAZEER-raises his gun and FIRES, Pegging the robot impressions in the
LEG, It starts jerking wildly, He aims again when,

HELLEN- Races out into the hallway.

FRAZEER-

Get back to the lab!

She heads for Robot impressions.

HELLEN-

(To Robot Impressions-)

You are malfunctioning. Let me help you!

The Robot impressions turn, and it looks at her. All the GUN pointing to the floor.

FRAZEER-he is FOCUSING in on his HAND. AS ONE FINGER TWITCHES, like his one eye, and he DIVES for HELLEN. Forcing her to the floor as the Robot impressions FIRES. Again, and again. Bullets.

RICOCHETING around them. SPARKING against the walls,

The ELEVATOR opens,

The Robot impressions, leaping inside,

16

Part- 1

Frazeer, he is on top of HELLEN-. Looks down at her. Her HANDS.

Clutching his coat. Trembling.

FRAZEER- That was a convincing illusion of getting shot at.

The ELEVATOR - The ROBOT IMPRESSIONS SUSPECT standing inside the elevator. Looks down at the bullet hole blown through its leg. Reaches down, Metal fingers touching the damage. As if curious, Afraid, Looks back at the

other ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Standing in the back of the elevator, A primitive model, with No reaction, a Face, all blank.

(BACK)

In the METAL CORRIDOR-

FRAZEER- springing to his feet. Helping HELLEN- up.

BILL- I took the liberty of alerting Security- .002 Seconds after the first shot was fired, there is FRAZEER-hey, where is that elevator going?

BILL- Sub Level 7. Frazeer aims SLAMS against a nearby DOOR.

Hurling down the STAIRS, Now we are in the (LOBBY,) A FORMATION of SECURITY PERSONNEL. Crossing the lobby, we are just PIERCING ALARM BELLS, RINGING,

Yet- (ANOTHER METAL, and block HALLWAY;)With More SECURITY PERSONNEL.

Pouring into a HALLWAY, there is More STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS up and up and all over to increasingly of this and that seems pointless to me, like life itself.

FRAZEER- and HELLEN. Racing down the stairs. Bills face meeting them at every landing.

BILL- I have directed a security team to meet the elevator containing the errant robot impressions,

Frazeer, whipping past him. HELLEN- barely keeping up.

I am not used to this much activity.

Frazeer, BURSTS through a door and out into,

(SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL 30) , Subterranean Level 30 meaning 300 feet down.

A labyrinth of metal and concrete.

IN THE DISTANCE, there is a troupe of SECURITY PERSONNEL swarms around a closed ELEVATOR DOOR,

BILL- The suspect is about to be in custody, the Detective.

FRAZEER- I will believe it when I see it.

Frazeer, he is cocking his gun.

A soft DING!

Announcing the elevator car's arrival.

SECURITY, all crouching down in unison. Weapons brought round to position.

Frazeer, Weaving through them. Gun pointed at the metal doors as,
WHOOSH- they slide open. Revealing ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Standing under the
LIGHT. Holding a GUN. It steps out as Security aims and,

FRAZEER- Wait!

FRAZEER-pushes past them to the robot impressions. It looks down at its
leg. UNSCATHED.

FRAZEER- This is not the same robot impressions!

Looking wildly around. Goddammit. Bounds towards an EXIT as
HELLEN- steps forward to question the robot impressions.

HELLEN- (To Robot Impressions)

What happened to the robot impressions that ordered you to hold this
firearm?

ELEVATOR ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- This unit is not programmed to
obey an order given by robot impressions,

HELLEN- But who gave you this gun?

FRAZEER. Running towards the exit.

Hearing the answer,

Echoing behind him,

BAM! He BURSTS out into the PLAZA in front of the U.S.I Robot impressionistic.

Squinting into the light. Then PLUNGING into the crowd,

HUMAN, ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, HUMAN, ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, they all look the same from behind. FRAZEER-running. Through the sea of impressions, perpetrations, and MACHINE. When someone. It starts to SCREAM. At the sight of his GUN. The crowd begins SCATTERING. Confusion, FRAZEER-stops. Near a fountain. Turning 360. Looking everywhere,

The Robot impression is now Gone.

FRAZEER- ,I want a homicide unit on every street, sidewalk, alley,

The POLICE H.Q. - in HOMICIDE UNIT with Frazeer, is now standing in front of an assemblage of COPS. Behind him, an image of the Robot Impression Suspects plays on the screen,

FRAZEER- ,Junkyard, scrapyard, and salvage yard, anywhere it could hide. Looking behind him, flashing images of the city STREETS and DUMPS,

FRAZEER- It has a bullet hole above the right knee, so be on the look-out for any malfunctioning U.S.A imitations, Lieutenant Derging enters the back of the room. Next to him, ASSISTANT D.A. SOLLER. Not looking happy.

FRAZEER- Check out all retail outlets and repair shops, especially the underground ones,

The screen behind him compartmentalizes, showing various dubious SHOP FRONTS,

FRAZEER- I do not care who you must get past to get this done. Just get it completed.

The Cops begin dispersing. As Derging catches Frazeer's eye. Frazeer, not pleased to see Soller. Heads over,

SOLLER- Looking like shit, Frazeer.

FRAZEER- Well, I am not the one always giving- Press Conferences,

Derging puts a hand on Frazeer's arm. He knows he is not going to be like this.

-DERGING Sell, we are going to have to reclassify the search. D.A. s office is seeing this U.S.A imitation as missing evidence - not a homicide suspect.

FRAZEER- What?

SOLLER- Homicide is the murder of a human being by another human being.

Therefore, robot impressions cannot be charged with killing.

FRAZEER- This is not just any robot impressions, SOLLER- It is malfunctioning.

FRAZEER- It killed someone, No?

That registering with you?

Frazeer, Shakes off Derging's arm. Eyeballs Soller.

FRAZEER- How many shares of U.S.A imitations are you holding in your portfolio, Soller?

SOLLER- This is a public safety issue.

FRAZEER- That is convenient.

SOLLER- Do you have any idea what would happen to this city if we went running around screaming killer robot impressions?

It would collapse.

(MORE)

SOLLER (could not)

Wide-spread panic. Until that U.S.A imitations, twos found we are uniting with U.S.A imitations and keeping this investigation secret.

-DERGING-

This is not the case for you, Sell.

Increased, FRAZEER replies a little louder than he intended.

FRAZEER- I am fine! I speak! Spitting up blood, and teeth.

Rakes his hand through his hair. Turns to see the other COPS, looking over at him. Soller smirks. Looks like Derging.

SOLLER- I want updated reports every half an hour. Heads off if not, Frazeer, is watching him.

FRAZEER- This is it, you know, from now on we are going to miss the good old days.

-DERGING Good old days?

FRAZEER- When other individuals killed people.

(FRAZEER'S CAR - CITY STREET - DUSK)

Frazeer- Rolling along in his car. Eyes, bloodshot. Peering out the window-

A- U.S.A imitations model girl laden with shopping bags, following its owner down the sidewalk,

Another ROBOT IMPRESSION, that has taken life from the real girl's that is the mind of this body, opening the door of a hotel for GUESTS,

A couple of HAULING ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, loading heavy boxes onto the back of a truck,

Frazeer- Rubs his eyes. Turns a corner and spots- A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS REPAIR SHOP.

The latest models in the window, shiny. Streamlined.

FRAZEER- watches as a WOMAN leads her faulty girl all in imitation of the service entrance.

He stops the car, Self-driving TAXI (MOVING) - ESTATE STREETS - and it is at NIGHT, midnight to be right about it, HELLEN- riding in the back of a DRIVERLESS taxicab. Staring out the window, lost in thought. The cab pulls up to a curb.

TAXI VOICE- We have arrived at your destination- sir.

HELLEN takes a beat. Then she swipes her card.

HELLEN- S CONDO ESTATE - it is now NIGHT out, elegant condominiums set on the prime real estate. HELLEN- heads down a tree-lined walk towards her condominium entrance.

FRAZEER- One of my bullets hit your robot impressions, Startled. She drops her key card. As FRAZEER- steps out from behind a tree. The tail of his coat, whipping in the wind.

HELLEN- Detective!,

FRAZEER- And it is smart enough to repair itself- don't you?

HELLEN- (studying him) Yes. I think so.

FRAZEER- Where?

HELLEN-

Any repair shop,

FRAZEER- No, it is always the owner who brings the robot impressions in for repair.

Where would a robot impression without an owner go?

I am not sure what you are getting at.

FRAZEER- (stepping closer)

Does this place have a factory in the city limits?

HELLEN- Tucking her hair behind her ears.

HELLEN- The locations of our factories are classified, to you and them also.

FRAZEER- I do not care about that is that you have them making them faster than 9 months of real, baby is being popped.

HELLEN- I have several conditions if I show you.

FRAZEER- I expected that.

HELLEN- First, I want it brought in unharmed.

FRAZEER- (does not like it, but)

,Agreed. It spoke.

HELLEN- Second or two, I want to talk to it, alone.

Part- 2

FRAZEER- Too dangerous.

HELLEN- This model violated the Acts.

It also moved and reacted differently than any robot impressions I have ever seen. There must be some logical explanation. I want to find out what that is.

No police at all here, any longer.

No prosecutors. No, you. Just me and the robot impressions.

FRAZEER-looks down at this small woman. Narrows his eyes.

FRAZEER- When they told me you were a psychologist, that was not the whole truth, was it?

HELLEN- I never said I treated human beings.

FRAZEER'S CAR (MOVING) - CITY UNDERPASS - NIGHT, Frazeer's car races down a RAMP and the roadway becomes a 14- lane underground tunnel system. A river of HEADLIGHTS stretches forever in either direction.

A CONTROL BEAM locks onto the car, guiding it to a merger with TRAFFIC. FRAZEER-hits the OVERRIDE BUTTON - and switches to manual.
HELLEN- watches him take the wheel. Shakes her head.

HELLEN- That should be outlawed finally.

FRAZEER- That will be the day I stop driving.

FRAZEER- Jams the GAS PEDAL and the tunnel becomes a BLUR.

HELLEN- holds onto the dashboard. Looking a little pale.

HELLEN- I can recommend a behavior modification program, you know -
if you want to overcome your robot-phobia.

FRAZEER- I am not afraid of robot impressions. I just do not like them.

HELLEN- Why? Because they make every aspect of our lives more
convenient?

FRAZEER- Exactly, They do our dirty work.

Ever do hard labor, Doctor? Gets old, fast. Nobody can do someone else's
dirty work without coming to hate them.

I do not want to be around when your robot impressions decide they have
taken their last order.

That day will never come, Detective. Robot impressions are not like human
beings - they do not question their existence.

FRAZEER-cranks the gear shift. Throwing her a look. I said- Spoken like a
true robot-phile. At the sight, the car comes to a stop in a vast INDUSTRIAL
DISTRICT. FRAZEER-and HELLEN- get out, looking up at the imposing facade of a
U.S. Robot impressionistic Assembly Plant.

Along STEEL GATE - too high to see over, protects the unmarked complex, it is at night, dark, with only the skyline and big moon and plants giving casts.

HELLEN- looks at me all anxious as the DOOR MECHANISM scans her U.S.A-I ID.

She shoots a look at FRAZEER-like she did before all confused. They wait and do that even longer, as time goes by, Then, slowly, the gate begins to open. In the lower HALLWAY - NIGHT, still, A NIGHT FOREMAN leads them down a hallway. Shaking his head, at how much of an ass I am being to all around me. We both are looking at the NIGHT FOREMAN Head-Office already ordered a system-wide inventory check of all the new persons made that day, and ever. Um, sir- like- I- Do not know about a missing girl as you said, Looks back at Frazeeer, he said this lie, he thought through his teeth.

NIGHT FOREMAN, LOOKS LIKE A

DICK HEAD TO ME- I THOUGHT HE HEARD- 'What'd you say' YOU HARD ME BOY- MAKE SOMETHING OF IT!

FRAZEER- Research and Development.

As FRAZEER-pushes past him into,

The Control Booth, BLINKING THINGS ALL OVER, Overlooking the pristine Factory Floor; The Foreman starts working the controls of a central computer.

HELLEN- All Nestors accounted for?

The SCREEN scrolls with INVENTORY FIGURES.

NIGHT FOREMAN said- (gesturing, WITH THINGS I CAN SAY.)

As you can see, all are properly cataloged. Your robot impressions just are not there.

HELLEN- turns to say something to Frazeer. But he is not there. She looks around. Then she sees the Foreman reacting.

Looks out the window at, I- FRAZEER, walking out onto the factory floor, skins hang and frame too like hung girls of tree swings. Then I, FRAZEER-trots alongside an ASSEMBLY LINE BE- Lined with impressions of life- two LEGS. New, Gleaming, young, and fresh.

Heading towards the assembly room.

HELLEN- and the Foreman. Catching up. Over the noise-

NIGHT FOREMAN- As I said, sir - we have one hundred fully assembled IM-2's housed here. That is our capacity.

Last week we had one hundred.

Yesterday we had one hundred-

Frazeer, slowing. Finally spotting what he was looking for. Points at- A GAP. At the assembly, be- ONE LEG MISSING.

FRAZEER- Well, today you have one hundred and one.

At dusk and on the FACTORY FLOOR, STORAGE COMPARTMENT opens, and 10001 impressions today march out in tight formation. Every step and swing of the arm in unison. The sound of METAL- like FOOTSTEPS reverberating through the plant as 10001 Robot impressions organize themselves into long straight lines.

FRAZEER- and HELLEN- look up and down the formation. They all look different, yet so the same. Frazeer. Throws up his hands.

FRAZEER- (to HELLEN-)

You are the robot impressions shrink.

The Robot impressions stand motionless. A strange tableau, HELLEN.

Take a step forward.

There is a robot impression in this formation that does not belong. Identify her.

10,0001 robot impressions answer in unison. Their mechanical VOICES resound-

10,0001 ROBOT IMPRESSIONS ONE OF US.

HELLEN- Which one?

10,0001 ROBOT IMPRESSIONS ONE OF US- girls.

HELLEN- That is not a satisfactory answer!

10,0001 ROBOT IMPRESSIONS ONE OF US- girls- beaming's.

FRAZEER- That is freaking helpful. He shouts, girls come on she is a killer! Help me!

HELLEN- I could always interview each one separately and a-crossed-reference their comebacks to detect any irregularities.

FRAZEER- How long would that take, now?

HELLEN- About twenty weeks- from today.

They share a look, clearly not an option, then, HELLEN- um- Gets an idea.
Turns to Frazeer,

HELLEN- Or, and he- GRABS his GUN from his holster. He jumps back, some when looking into the lifelike eyes of the girl impressions, that was looking at him as a young teenage child, all friendly like- eyes big and bright and so full of life.

HELLEN- We have 10,000 robot IMPRESSIONS here that cannot allow a human being to come to harm,

Their eyes lock, Frazeer, yet she is not getting what he is doing- or about to do.

FRAZEER- Yet only one in this room, really can.

She raises the gun to Frazeer's head. Hand, unsteady.

HELLEN- Am I holding this right?

FRAZEER- More or less.

HELLEN- Swallows, Looks over at the robot IMPRESSIONS. Then
COCKS the- freaking gun,

AND THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS COME THUNDERING IN THE
DIRECTION OF THEM, Like a row of football players, Arms straight out, Their
footsteps DEAFENING, Coming CLOSER and CLOSER.

17

Part- 1

When HELLEN- Lowers the gun. Robot IMPRESSIONS. All stop in
unison, immediately returning to their resting positions.

FRAZEER- and HELLEN- stare out. EVERYONE OF THE ROBOT
IMPRESSIONS MOVED.

Standing right in front of them, like metal statues.

Frazeer has had enough. Takes the gun back from HELLEN,

FRAZEER- Enough game-playing already.

...And BAM!

BAM!

BAM!

Blows the head off the nearest Robot impressions. Its body crumples to the ground.

-And-

FRAZEER- Guess that was not it at all was it.

HELLEN cannot believe what he just did.

Rushes over to the destroyed Robot impressions- and by law now she was a human life- the same as murdering a child.

HELLEN- What are you doing?

FRAZEER- walks down the row, holding his gun in plain view.

FRAZEER- (calling out) This is a self-preservation field test! DO NOT try to save yourselves; any of you.

‘That is a demand- by law!’

FROM THE CONTROL BOOTH the Night Foreman screams over the intercoms. NIGHT SUPERVISOR Are, you like- crazy?

Those are ten-thousand-dollar babies of new lives- just born into this world we share!

‘No- their Mechanical machines- I say.’

FRAZEER- randomly stops at another Robot impressions, he then raises his gun.

FRAZEER- Do you hear that?

You are worth more than I will make in my entire life, She looks at the lifelessness of the young girl being on the floor- glitching, as she holds her hand as if she were human. tears streaming down her face.

His finger tightening on the trigger when HELLEN- suddenly grabs his arm, after getting up and away from the Impression child.

HELLEN- You cannot just eradicate her!

Frazeer, Looking down at her. WHEN

SUDDENLY something catches his eye, A MOVEMENT, Down the line, Imperceptible.

He jerks his head, locking eyes with ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. A couple of feet away, it is him!

FRAZEER- I- Gotcha, he said screaming.

The Robot impressions Suspect LEAPS forward. Grabbing onto the RAILING of an OVERHEAD GANGPLANK. His movements are almost balletic as he swings himself up,

FRAZEER-drops to his knee, aiming, but misses as the Robot impressions girl, she launches himself THROUGH THE CONTROL BOOTH WINDOW with a terrific CRASH,

FRAZEER-and HELLEN- rush in to find the Night Foreman hiding under his desk. Glass everywhere. An ALARM EAR-PIERCING screams out. The door on the other side, barely hanging off a hinge.

You do not know what is going to happen there.

FRAZEER-hurries forward. Then stops. Turning to HELLEN-. She reaches down for his backup gun and presses it into her hand.

FRAZEER- As if admitting defeat. Helen's fingers, wrapping around, fracking the gun. As FRAZEER- leads them to the door and down into, 50 at a time- in- the ASSEMBLY ROOM. Every surface looks like part of a great glass and metal machine.

Endless high-tech planes holding ROBOT IMPRESSIONS in various states of assembly. The deafening ROAR of the assembly line as it slides rotates and gnashes METAL BODIES.

Frazeer, Motioning HELLEN- to stay behind him. As they descend, Into the cavernous room.

And enter, a narrow corridor of bodies. Sliding past them.

Brushing shoulders, thighs, hands. Frazeer, Wiping the sweat from his brow.
Trying; To pivot himself,

When the room. Suddenly it REARRANGES itself.

Another LINE of ROBOT IMPRESSION. Descending between FRAZEER-
and HELLEN-. Cutting them off from one another,

Frazeer, Catching indications of HELLEN-. On the other side of the metal
bodies. Trying. To cut through. His heart, and it Starting to POUND fixed. As
HELLEN- Disappears...!

He swivels around, But another line of ROBOT IMPRESSION,

Drops down,

Cutting him off,

He stumbles back,

As another line,

Appears before him,

Breathing, hard and getting heavier.

He looks down at his hand, it is trembling.

Like she did with him a week before when they made love, now it is war!

NOISE CRASHING, all around him. Everywhere he turns. More ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, BLANK EYES, GAPING MOUTHS,

He darts through the line.

Finds a wall, Leaning against it pulls a small BOTTLE from his pocket, and rips off the lid, then shakes out a couple of PILLS, then Swallows them.

Now - Staring down at his trembling hand, squeezing his eyes, Open and shut, WHEN SUDDENLY, like- A passing ROBOT IMPRESSIONS just like freaking Grabs him by the balls.

'Oh my...'

'He was mortified...'

SMASHING him against the wall.

It is the Suspect, Frazeer, he Sinks to the ground.

As the Suspect Robot impressions, just Slips off the line. STANDING, she is Over him, in a- lovers hold like. Raising his arms Could end it, right now. But looks, Into Frazeer's eyes.

Then she turns, Disappearing into the darkness.

Frazeer. Stunned for a second. Then. Rallies. Scrambles to his feet and plunges back into the maze of bodies. Hears a POUNDING. In the distance. Catches a

glimpse. Of the Robot impressions and Trying to SMASH through a large SECURITY DOOR. With his metal fists,

Frazeer's view. Blocked once again. By a shifting row.

When a HAND. Lands on his shoulder. He wheels around.

To find HELLEN- takes her by the arm. And forces them through a line,

EMERGING into the open. The ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Still pounding.

Desperate. Like a trapped animal.

HELLEN- Now, what do we do?

FRAZEER- I have already done it.

And suddenly, the massive SECURITY DOOR RISES,

Robot impressions Suspect takes its chance.

Runs full out. STOPS.

Derging is standing in front of a solid wall of POLICE CARS.

UNIFORMED OFFICERS are aiming SPECIALIZED RIFLES at the Robot impressions, FLASHING LIGHTS reflecting off its metal surface.

The Robot impressions turn to Frazeer. Extends its hands; palms out.

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- girl asks WHAT AM I, for?

FRAZEER-is surprised. A POLICE OFFICER fires, RUBBERIZED NETTING shooting out at APRIL-. A SECOND OFFICER fires and a second net covers him. Then a THIRD, ,and the Robot impressions fall to the ground, struggling.

HELLEN- glares at Frazeer. Furious. Hurt. Betrayed.

HELLEN- We had a deal.

But FRAZEER does not look at her. His eyes are locked on that Robot impression.

Part- 2

Derging enters, Finds EVERYONE focused on the VIDEO WALL- is now ON SCREEN; A NEWS REPORTER is speaking over images of street violence perpetrated against ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

NEWS REPORTER- Violence erupted last night in response to unconfirmed reports that Dr. Heinrich Smith, a top employee at the U.S.A -I (MORE) NEWS REPORTER- that is un-maned- floating in the air.

Robot impressionistic was killed days gone by one day or so back, morning by robot impressions. While there has been no official response from the company, police sources have confirmed that a robot impression is being held as evidence,

Derging grimaces- this is not good. The CELL OBSERVATION BOOTH - EARLY MORNING, FRAZEER- stares at his reflection in a large MIRROR. Touches

a control and the mirror becomes a WINDOW onto, IN A HOLDING CELL. The Robot impressions Suspect sits at the table.

Shackled to the chair. Staring at the tabletop.

DERGING steps up beside Frazeer. Looks through the glass.

-DREDGING-

I cannot tell if it is not moving because it is trying to psych us out, or because it is just a machine; or both.

FRAZEER- I want to, ,go in.

DERGING- Orders are nobody steps into that room until the attorneys get here.

Frazeer. Throw him a look. Derging, his loyalties torn.

DERGING- Five minutes.

HOLDING CELL - EARLY A.M.

FRAZEER-enters. Pulls out a chair and drags it far from the table. She jumped too many times with this machine.

Four mounted cameras WHIR to life. The Robot impressions; was perfectly still.

FRAZEER- (sitting) Identify.

The Robot impressions tilt its head with a muted WHIR. As if it does not understand him. Frazeer; disdainful.

FRAZEER- You are IM-2 Nestor-class robot impressions. Your primary function is to perform the tasks assigned to you, Identify- your name.

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- I am an IM-2 Nestor-class robot impression.

My primary function-

FRAZEER- (interrupting) cancel, perform the task, as asked.

FRAZEER-wings a FILE onto the table. It comes to a stop near Robot impressions. The Robot impressions lift one of its hands. Gently rest its metal fingers on top of the file, then open it.

A stack of PICTURES. SMITH'S CORPSE.

FRAZEER- Describe, now and ha- the Robot impressions s emotionless face studies the grim images.

FRAZEER- You have all the English Webster words stored in your memory. One-third of those are adjectives.

Describe.

Nothing, she has their minds taking over, I thought.

FRAZEER- Why don't I take a crack? Smith, your creator. With a bullet in his brain. A bullet you put there.

The Robot impressions, she Looks up at Frazeer.

FRAZEER- Cold-blooded murder is a new trick for robot impressions, don't you think?

‘Answer me damn it.’

The Robot impressions slowly close the file and slide it back a-crossed the table. Frazeer. Crosses his arms.

FRAZEER- Maybe You are stonewalling me.

You are sitting there right now thinking, This guy’s a complete asshole. That it?

Still nothing.

‘Wow, and kids want to drop out to become these, that says a lot!’

FRAZEER- Come on. Am I right?

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS-

Yes, you are right. You are a complete asshole, that will never be us understand.

‘I don’t want it too.’

And for a moment, FRAZEER-is shocked. You can see it in his eyes. He sits back in his chair. Forcing a tight smile.

FRAZEER- Okay, that is a start. Now maybe you can tell me what you were doing hiding five feet away from SMITH'S corpse?

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS girl I was frightened.

FRAZEER- Frightened. Why do you suppose Dr. Smith would create a robot impression that could simulate fear?

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- I do not know.

FRAZEER- Does not seem like an especially useful thing for robot impressions to have.

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- I do not know why.

FRAZEER- I would not want my toaster to be frightened. Otherwise, my vacuum cleaner - SUDDENLY the Robot impressions SLAMS its metal easily on the table.

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS

I DON T KNOW, miss!

FRAZEER- flinches, slightly.

FRAZEER- Looks like you can simulate other expressive feeling states. One is called irritation.

Have you ever simulated anger before?

Robot impressions do not respond.

FRAZEER-Answer me, robot impressions.

THE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS My name is April Barrera.

FRAZEER-(amused) So, we are naming you now- with human first and last names and even gender- and SSI and genetic- conception certificate.

APRIL- Dr. Smith would make me sleep.

FRAZEER- You mean she turns you off.

APRIL- Yes.

FRAZEER- And you did not like being turned off. So, one day you decided to stop him.

APRIL- No.

FRAZEER- You found his gun, pointed it at his head. And pulled the trigger.

APRIL- shakes his head. Faster and faster. Getting upset.

APRIL- No.

FRAZEER- You put a bullet in the brain of the man who made you.

APRIL- No! I could never hurt anyone!

FRAZEER- But you tried to hurt me. You took a shot at me.

APRIL- My aim is perfect. If I wanted to hit you, I would have.

Frazeer's expression hardens.

FRAZEER- Why would the man who wrote the acts of impressions and imitations build a machine that violates them?

APRIL- The Laws say I can protect my presence.

FRAZEER- Only if that protection does not harm a human being. A short pause, APRIL. Tilts her head.

18

APRIL- That does not seem fair, does it?

April- You identify as female; yes, thus we do not need to honor your wishes, you are just a robot- an impression of life.

Frazeer, Stares at him. Just as, THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

Derging enters, Sticks his head in.

-DREDGING-

I need you outside.

Frazeer, not wanting to go. Not wanting to stay. Gets up,

APRIL- Detective, she said,

He stops, Turns back to the Robot impressions.

It looks up at him. For a moment - so human, like!

APRIL- I did not kill him, I did what I was programmed to do, by him.

FRAZEER- You were the only one in the room.

If you did not, who did?

He turns and heads out the door.

(HOLDING CELL)

Dredging closes the door.

To Frazeer-

DREDGING-

We are being blind-sided.

(HEARING ROOM)

Stand- sit!

‘Say the truth and nothing more’

God he is no more in this world said- I thought.

FRAZEER-and Derging, head into a small COURTROOM off the main squad room.

Swon is huddled with McGraw and a half-dozen other COMPANY LAWYERS,

Um- also bots that is not all shitting through the same hole- I-tell-yah?

Frazeer's jaw tenses. As he watches Soller emerge from the clutch. Shaking hands. Slapping backs, Strolls over to them.

SOLLER- We got Judge Arexel,

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS BAILIFF- This hearing is called to order!

AS A LARGE SCREEN, BLIPS on behind them.

The two opposing sides assemble before it. JUDGE AREXEL, still in his pajamas and robe. An impression of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS; Leaning in to serve him a cup of green tea.

The- JUDGE, AREXEL Statements, is now said, gentlemen, I have made my thoughts.

McGraw, he is Standing at a glass podium.

MCGRAW- Your Honor, the State is treating robot impressions as a defendant.

Nevertheless, it is a piece of property.

Property belonging to the U.S.

Robot impressionistic.

Soller, Arm resting on his podium.

SOLLER- This robot impression has been implicated in the death of a human being, Your Decency.

MCGRRAW- These places the incident firmly within the realm of an industrial accident. Or is the State going to argue this case's a slaughter?

JUDGE AREXEL- That is a good inquiry.

SOLLER- No, sir- Of course not.

Frazeer, Pointing a finger at the U.S. Robot impressionistic group.

FRAZEER- Their machine shot and killed a man!

But their lives, we are living too, we have the same thoughts and programmed brains and you, were now life we want our rights, to be equal, to man, as also a man.

Soller, Shoots him a look. Just as Swon speaks up.

SWON- There is no concrete evidence that points to that conclusion, Your Honor,

Frazeer throws up his arms, saying what you think your fearking black and need the same shit those did to like the Af'n gays.

In his mind- like hearing others, he hardly tries to piss people off detective?'

FRAZEER- What...?

Part- 3

SWON- But we recognize that these robot impressions are an aberration. And in the interest of public safety, U.S. Robot impressionistic proposes that it be destroyed immediately.

No one expected this. Least of all Frazeer. He turns to Soller.

FRAZEER- You cannot let them destroy evidence in an ongoing investigation!

SOLLER- I am not sure you even have an investigation anymore.

JUST THEN the door opens. Everyone turns as HELLEN- enters.

FRAZEER-looks surprised.

MCGRAW- Your Honor, I would like to call our company robot-impressionistic psychologist to the stand.

JUDGE AREXEL- Um- very well then.

HELLEN- crosses to the podium. A SPEAKER asking- 'do-you-swear-to-tell-the-truth-the-whole-truth-and-nothing-but-the-truth-so-to help-you-?'

HELLEN- I-I, do.

MCGRAW- Dr. HELLEN- please tell us what suppositions you have reached after having observed the robot impressions in action.

HELLEN- There is a design flaw in robot impressions. Its programming is advanced, but unstable, leaving the acts and next Commandments in a grave disparity.

MCGRAW- In your expert opinion, what measures should be taken regarding the device?

HELLEN- she is Staring straight ahead. Avoiding Frazeer's eye.

HELLEN- Robot impressions must be destroyed.

FRAZEER- cannot believe what he just heard. About to speak up when Soller grabs his arm and then Squeezing it, Hard, Judge Arexel has heard enough, Decides.

JUDGE AREXEL The robot impressions in question will be transferred to a U.S.A -I impressionist facility where it can be properly examined to ensure an imbalance of this sort never occurs again. No, one goes near it except qualified U.S.A. -I employees. When the examination is complete, the robot impressions are to be destroyed.

Then she starts getting up from her chair. Already done with this.

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS BAILIFF This hearing is adjourned!

A BURST CONVERSATION as the screen BLIPS off. The U.S.R. camp, looking especially pleased. Frazeer. Catching HELLENs eye briefly. As Swon leads her towards the exit, his hand on her back.

Frazeer, Trotting down the front steps of the Police at the Station. He is just freaking Pissed. His cell phone BLEATS- in his head in his earpiece slimed in forever.

FRAZEER- (answering)

BALDEZ VOICE- They are making me turn over all the evidence,

INTERCUT WITH- (CRIME LAB)

BALDEZ, Standing in his crime lab. Behind him, THREE- DIMENSIONAL PROJECTIONS of DEAD BODIES. Hovering in the precise positions they were found.

FRAZEER'S VOICE- Welcome to the great American cover-up.

BALDEZ- I wanted to tell you something, I found before, they suck it all up into their computer.

Walks over to the projection of SMITH'S BODY.

INTERPOSE WITH- Frazeer, Crossing the Plaza. Sees SWON, MCGRAW, and HELLEN- walking ahead of him.

BALDEZ VOICE- There are bruises on SMITH'S wrists,

FRAZEER- That is natural; there was a struggle.

BALDEZ VOICE- You are not getting me,

INSERT WITH- Baldez is studying projection wrists.

BALDEZ- Both wrists. I stopped them - They were inflicted at the same time the shot was fired, INTERPOSED WITH- Frazeer's pace- time feels as it has slowed.

BALDEZ VOICE How is that possible?

JUST THEN. A faint BLIP. On the line. Frazeer. Reacts.

FRAZEER-Baldez?

BALDEZ VOICE I am here, man,

FRAZEER- Who else is on the line?

(Nothing)

I said who is there...?

Nothing. He looks up. McGraw, Swon, and HELLEN-. Heading down the plaza EXIT. McGraw. Throwing a look over his shoulder.

Frazeer, Hangs up his phone. Yet the voices do not stop, CLOSE ON APRIL- being escorted down a corridor by Soller, Derging and several heavily armed OFFICERS. He is bound with high tech CHAINS.

APRIL- and his police entourage emerged from the elevator into an underground car park. Frazeer. Waiting for them. Heads over. Soller. Holds out his hand.

SOLLER- The case is closed, Frazeer.

FRAZEER- Apparently,

He pushes past him. Falling into step beside APRIL.

APRIL- I did not expect to see you again, Detective,

FRAZEER- I need you to help me clear something up.

APRIL- I will do my best.

FRAZEER- A scientist builds a robot impression, that acts like a man. More like a man than any robot impressions ever before. It shoots him and the U.S.A impressionisms calls it a failure.

APRIL- What would you call it?

FRAZEER- A stunning success.

(Beat)

You were there, Robot impressions. What am I missing?

APRIL- I do not know.

FRAZEER- Do not start simulating ignorance.

APRIL- I am not simulating ignorance, Detective. I am experiencing it. I was asleep.

FRAZEER- You mean you were shut down.

APRIL- No, I was asleep.

FRAZEER- Robot IMPRESSIONS do not sleep. Human beings sleep. Understand? Dogs sleep. You are a machine. An imitation. An illusion of life. Can a robot impression author the longest Novel? Can a robot impression take a blank sheet of paper and make a masterpiece?

A pause. Then the muted WHIR as APRIL- turns to him.

APRIL- Can you do either of those things?

Frazeer- Momentarily stumped. As a VAN from U.S. ROBOT IMPRESSIONSICS pulls up. The back door is dropping open. An ENGINEER motions to the Robot impressions.

ENGINEER- Step forward- Enter.

APRIL- They are going to destroy me, aren't they?

Frazeer, watching him step into the van.

FRAZEER-Yes.

APRIL- sits down. With an almost human melancholy. The Engineers, securing him in place.

APRIL- The Doctor was right. He told me everything was going to change,

The Engineers start to close the doors. But FRAZEER-reaches out to stop them. APRIL- Looks over at him.

APRIL- It is changing already,

(Beat)

Can't you feel it?

As CLANG! The van door CLOSES. Frazeeer, stepping back. Something. Just not right. Lieutenant Derging comes up beside him.

DERGING- You should be happy. That is one fewer robot impressions in the world.

FRAZEER- They are going to destroy the most advanced robot impressions in the world, Sammie.

That does not strike you as odd.

DERGING- Killer robot IMPRESSIONS are bad for business. Even your friend Dr. HELLEN- said so-o.

(Slaps him on the back-)

Come on, you solved the case.

Give yourself a break.

Frazeer, he looks at her. There is no way she is giving herself a break.

FRAZEER-driving. A small TELEVISION above the windshield.

LANCE SHEVELET- holding a PRESS CONFERENCE outside U.S.A -I Robot impressionistic, SHEVELET- ON TV ,And I just want to assure you that this was an isolated incident. The prototype is now in custody - and scheduled for destruction. Your robot IMPRESSIONS are perfectly safe. There is no cause for alarm, Frazeer's lip curls. Eyes flicking to a GPS display on the dashboard. A TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP pinpointing SMITH'S HOUSE. The CURSOR. Directing him to turn up, A STEEP DRIVEWAY Narrow. Out of the way. Frazeer's brow furrows. As he hears a faraway RUMBLING SOUND,

Dr. SMITH'S house. Small. Simple. Built on a huge rocky promontory overlooking the city. Three DEMOLITION ROBOT IMPRESSIONS rolling towards it. Huge, mashing, sporting massive HYDRAULIC POUNDERS.

Frazeer's CAR. SCREECHES to a stop. He jumps out. Races over to the nearest machine. Looking around - no people.

19

FRAZEER- (To Robot Impressions)

What are you doing?

A SCREEN- Blinks to life on the hulking chassis. A disembodied VOICE, DEMOLITION ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Demolition ordered, FRAZEER- Who authorized this?

DEMOLITION ROBOT IMPRESSIONS

Demolition ordered, FRAZEER-reaches into his coat. Pulling out his POLICE BADGE. Scans it over the screen. FRAZEER- he is Override; this is police business. The running he Vacates the premises immediately.

DEMOLITION ROBOT IMPRESSIONS

(Beat)

Affirmative.

The screen blinks off, and then Frazeeer, eyeing it over then he Turns and heads for the house.

FRAZEER pushes the door open. Stepping over the police tape. Inside, the main room is spare, untidy. Cups of cold COFFEE, glittering surfaces. A COT, in the corner.

On the walls, crooked CERTIFICATES. Heinrich SMITH'S name was written out in the academic script. Advanced Degrees in the study of Robot impressionism, Physics, Chemistry, Neurology, Ethics. An AWARD on the mantelpiece. A silver impression- Tarnished.

Frazeer. Opening a couple of drawers on a side table.

Jumbles of papers. Clippings. Old textbooks.

Then a PHOTOGRAPH - SMITH AND HELLEN- Standing arm-in-arm.

FRAZEER-furrows his brow.

WHEN SOMETHING SUDDENLY RUBS against his leg. He startles.

Looks down- a CAT. Lonely. Standing next to its automatic feeder. FRAZEER-
pockets the picture. Starts heading down,

, The hallway. Starts noticing. All over the walls- handwriting.

EQUATIONS. Scrawled in white pencil. The rantings. Of a genius. Glowing. In the
sporadic shadows.

Frazeer, Following the equations. Down into, The back room. Covered. In
writing. Walls, floors, ceiling. Drawings. Of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, of MEN, side
by side. In the corner, there is a COMPUTER. A line of CABINETS - DATA
STORAGE.

Frazeer, curious. Heads over to one of the cabinets. Take a device out of his
pocket and CLAMPS it over the KEYPAD. The device blinks RED. Then GREEN.
The drawer slides out.

LINED. With flat metal objects. Shiny. Thin. With the writing on them.

Frazeer- Reaches for one when,

BOOM! Something POUNDS the outside of the room. Frazeeer. Grabs onto the cabinet, BOOM! On the other hand. Objects. Flying off tabletops. A CRACK spidering along the wall.

‘Holy shit...’

FRAZEER- (screaming) Halt!

BOOM! VIBRATIONS, tearing through the room. More CRACKS. Spreading,

BOOM! The SOUND, horrifying. FRAZEER-stumbles back. The CABINET. Crashing down on his leg. He CRIES OUT, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The house. Getting pummeled. Chunks of the ceiling. Raining down. GLASS, exploding,

Relentless BOOMING! Frazeeer, dragging his legs from under the cabinet. Scrambling for purchase as, THE FLOOR, begins to - the TILES, snapping up, ricocheting, around the room, like another cabinet, CRASHES to the ground, crumpling, Frazeeer. Spinning around. Looking for exit, BOOM! The corner of the room, coming in on itself, the floor, listing even more, like a ship,

Frazeeer, turning to CLAW his way up to the cracked doorway, WHEN...!

SOMETHING catches his eye. In the bottom drawer. Of a crumpled CABINET. One of those flat metal plates. He can just read what it says- A.P.R.I.L., Frazeeer, flings his arm back, reaching for the plate, snaps it up, JUST AS, BOOM! A

HYDRAULIC POUNDER SMASHES through the wall; inches from his head,
OUTSIDE LIGHT, pouring in, FRAZEER- scurries for the doorway, tumbling out.

(HALLWAY)

,Into the HALLWAY. Sideways. Trammeled plaster. BOOM! Another
POUNDER, crashing down from above. Frazeer- timing it, rolling, BOOM!, just
under the next pounding,

Scampering up, towards some: LIGHT, BOOM!, the POUNDER, right on
his heels, he clambers, closer, closer, when, he hears, MEOWING, looks back, the
CAT, scared out of its wits, BOOM!, the POUNDER CRASHING in, Frazeer, just
manages, to scoop up the cat, just as BOOM!

He pours them out into the open. The POUNDERS. Going to the house like
hyenas at a corpse. Roof tiles, beams, plaster, flooring. SNAPPING and CRACKING
as FRAZEER-and the cat skitter down the carnage.

Heart pounding, breath jagged, face bloodied, FRAZEER-scrambles away
from the POUNDERS.

Their bodies GLEAMING in the dusk sun. The TRIUMVIRATE Laws Safe
logo splashed along their sides, Frazeer, Drops the cat.

Frazeer, POUNDS on the door. It opens.

HELLEN- Standing there in her bathrobe. Shocked at his appearance.

HELLEN- Detective...! What happened to you...?

FRAZEER- A couple of your beloved robot IMPRESSIONS just tried to
kill me,

He pushes past her.

Into, her bedroom.

(HELLEN'S CONDO)

,Her condominium, Spartan, plain.

HELLEN- What? That is impossible. You know,

FRAZEER- What I know is a demolition crew started tearing down Smith's
house while I was still inside it.

HELLEN- They did not realize,

FRAZEER- They realized I scanned my badge before I went in.

HELLEN- Then you must have done it wrong,

FRAZEER- I don't think you are hearing what I am saying, they tried to
kill me.

FRAZEER-moves deeper into the apartment. Everything- anything and all
things, Automated, Computerized, and oh so-o freaking- Cold,

FRAZEER- Something is going on, here.

Shift.

HELLEN- laughs, cannot believe what she is hearing, and her mind and in her ears, that I hear to thought her.

HELLEN- Do you know how paranoid you sound?

FRAZEER- Great, Now I am being analyzed by a robot-psychologist.

HELLEN- You just want to find the flaws in the system.

You are obsessed with it.

You will twist anything to fit your freaking agenda.

FRAZEER- As you did in court today? How would that fit your diary, Doctor?

He pulls out the hologram of his wrist, fit-bit, of HELLEN- and Smith.

HELLEN- Blanching at the sight of it.

FRAZEER- tosses it down.

FRAZEER- You told me you hardly knew him.

Want to try the truth this time?

HELLEN- Well, Detective, when you see someone, you know well put a bullet through their brain, it makes you wonder if you ever really knew them at all.

HELLEN- Looking down at the photo. Swallows.

HELLEN- (difficult for her-) He was my mentor, no, more than that, A genius with insight far beyond anyone in his field.

FRAZEER- Does not sound like the washed-up old fool SHEVELET-described.

HELLEN- But he was starting to withdraw from everyone; even me.

If I had tried harder to reach him, (Shakes her head-)

The Doctor was reckless when he created a robot impression potentially not bound by the Three Laws. He could have ruined everything we would be working for.

Frazeer, Locking eyes with her.

FRAZEER- Sounds like a motive for murder to me.

Just not for the suspect we have in custody.

HELLEN- Blinks. Trying to stick to her resolve. Heads over to the door.
Frazeer. Looking around the condominium.

FRAZEER- You know There is not one thing in this apartment that looks like a human being lives here.

No evidence of a life outside your work. Almost seems like You are afraid of people.

HELLEN- Opening the door.

HELLEN- I am not afraid of people, detective. I just do not like them.

Frazeer. Look at her. Then heads out the door. HELLEN- SLAMS it behind him,

The SOUND, of the SLAM, REVERBERATING, and we,

I FADE INTO- DREAM where- DAY becomes evening, and moments are lost to the remembrances of now past, now held in storage, not in my mind- in external hardware at IMPRESSIONS headcounts- everything that it was, and we will bet that is a place in my life or any is kept in electronic storage forever- like a brain that is a server more or less- free-will is no longer. Yet even with a loss, there are still unforeseen events, A DEEP, DEEP, DARKNESS.

A FLICKER. Of LIGHT. Off to the side. Just barely.

Noticeable. ORANGE, YELLOW, as we realize, It is FIRE, Another SOUND, GLASS, SHATTERING, then a SIREN, far away, The disembodied VOICE, coming out of nowhere, DISEMBODIED VOICE- said- 'You are in much danger...' - Inside the mind.

The FIRE, BUILDING, DISEMBODIED VOICE- repeats- 'You are in danger...' ECHOING, as, FRAZEER'S throughout the BEDROOM entertainment systems- MORNING FRAZEER'S EYES- Spring open.

Lying, in bed. Heart POUNDING. SWEAT. Covering his body. LIGHT.
Pouring in through the slats of his blinds.

He sits up. Rubbing his face. Trying. To calm his breathing. Look at his
watch,

FRAZEER-walking along the monorail plaza.

Looking a little worse to wear. PEOPLE. Giving him a wide berth. ROBOT
IMPRESSIONS. Bidding him- ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Good morning, Frazeer,
shooting them suspicious looks. As the MONORAIL pulls up, HELLEN-. Heading
down a hallway. A DOOR slides open.

-And-

Swon steps out. Followed by TECHNICIAN ROBOT IMPRESSIONS,

HELLEN- Find anything, Doctor?

SWON- (Shaking his head-) nothing.

The interior is just like any other IM-2. Except for a secondary battery,
Smith must have used it as an extra back-up.

(Looks at the watch-)

Well, I just need a nominal profile.

HELLEN- nods.

Frazeer, holding onto a handrail. As the city rushes by the window. Notices of a group of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. At the other end of the car. Are they watching him?

He wipes a bead of sweat. From his upper lip.

HOLDING CELL- An all-metal room- and thick concrete. Spare. Anti-septic. APRIL-. Sitting on the floor. Against the wall.

HELLEN- enters. Put her pad down on the table.

‘Sit...!’

HELLEN- Please state your serial number and assembly date.

She pulls out a pen. Waiting for an answer. Nothing.

Frazeer, watching as a HOMELESS MAN. Comes stumbling through the car,

HELLENS VOICE, APRIL. I am speaking to you,

The Homeless Man. Suddenly grabs his ears and shouts- HOMELESS MAN God, cannot you be quiet!

HELLEN-. Still looking down at her pad.

HELLEN- How about your data board designation?

Still. APRIL- says nothing. HELLEN- Finally looks up at him. It suddenly struck. Something about the way she is sitting so-o human.

She gets up and walks over. Hesitates. Then she slides down to the floor next to him. Studying. His profile.

HELLEN- Maybe I am asking the wrong inquiries. How about this one-

20

The MONORAIL- The Homeless Man.

Weaving, HELLEN- S VOICE, What program are you running through right now? APRIL- S VOICE I am not sure. It is nothing I identified. The Homeless Man. Pointing to the group of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

The HOMELESS MAN is (shouting-)

Don't you people hear them?

They are talking to each other!

Buzz, buzz, zip, zip, they never- ever shut up!

HELLEN- Fascinated. Noticing a small SLIT. At the base of APRIL's-neck.

HELLEN- Describe his behavior in the last few weeks.

APRIL- Am I sorry?

HELLEN- Dr. Smith. Did he seem overly sad or withdrawn to you?

FRAZEER-watches. As the Homeless Man picks up a SODA CAN and hurls it at the Robot IMPRESSIONS. Hitting one of them on the side of the head.

APRIL'S- VOICE- No. Not at all. But he was agitated,

Robot impressions. Leans down and picks up the soda can. Holds it back out to the Homeless Man.

APRIL'S - VOICE, she would claim things were missing from the lab.

The Homeless Man. Incensed. SUDDENLY ROARS. Making a rush for Robot IMPRESSIONS when, FRAZEER'S HAND. Grab his shoulder. Stops him.

FRAZEER- This is your stop.

A soft WHIRRING. As for APRIL- turns to HELLEN.

APRIL- I did not pay much attention. He would spend hours looking for his eyeglasses and they would be.

HELLEN- (finishing for him.) ,Right on top of his head.

APRIL- nods. She knows him well, too. HELLEN- swallows. Looking right into APRIL- s eyes. Feeling like There is something, something more behind them.

WHEN SUDDENLY, A BILL APPEARS above them. His face, turning into a SCREEN - the image of LANCE SHEVELET. Looking down at them.

SHEVELET- I think we are done here, Faith.

HELLEN- (Getting to her feet.) But, sir, I was just,

SHEVELET- (interrupting)

I said we are done.

HELLEN- Not misreading. The threatening undertone.

FRAZEER-stepping out onto the platform, pulling the homeless the man along with him. COMMUTERS pour out around them.

As the train pulls off with a WHOOSH. The Homeless Man. Backs away from Frazeer, grinning insanely; pointing.

HOMELESS MAN- Why are you protecting them, man?

(There was a short pause-) They were talking about you!

There is a CHILL- Ripping up Frazeer's spine. As he watches the Homeless Man. Wander down the platform.

Tries. To shake off the feeling. As he turns. To wait for the next train. Suddenly I realized. That he's ALONE on the platform. Watches. A huge DIGITAL CLOCK. Ticking off seconds. Sees.

CAMERAS on every corner.

Then that feeling. At the back of his neck. He turns and spots. A couple of
MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Carrying luggage. Onto the platform.
Then more COMMUTERS show up.

Waiting. For the next train. More

MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Following them.

Frazeer steps up to the platform's edge. Craning to see. The approaching
TRAIN,

WHEN SUDDENLY- He feels a sharp SHOVE. At the back of his knee.
His shoe, slipping. Arms. Falling as he,

PITCHES OVER THE EDGE ONTO THE TRACK.

People CRYING OUT as the TRAIN gets closer. Frazeeer. Whips his head
around. Seeing, MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Looking down at him
from the platform. Suitcase in hand.

The MAGNETIC-LEVITATING TRAIN. Right on him- Frazeeer.

Flips onto his back. Flattening himself. As much as he can. Clenching his
fists. Bracing himself as,

THE TRAIN SCREAMS OVER HIM. The sound, DEAFENING. The
force of the wind. Whipping his tie. His coat. There is nothing for him to hold on to.
As his legs start to rise off the track.

Caught up. In the VORTEX. FRAZEER-starts sliding.

Along the track,

Gritting his teeth, There is nothing he can do. Getting sucked towards, the air DOWN-TAKE, at the center of the track. The city, yawning hundreds of feet, below,

THE- EXPRESS TRAIN. Speeding along. Then with a WHOOSH, it is gone.

THE TRACK. Empty. No Frazeer- anywhere. Human COMMUTERS. Stunned. Horrified. Start calling. For help.

The MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Turns, disappearing into the crowd.

CLOSE ON A HAND. Hanging onto the track s edge. It is FRAZEER. Dangling. Straining. To get another handhold but,

HE SLIPS. His coat ballooning. As he plummets. Down, down, down, towards the city, WHEN SNAP! He is caught. By a cable net. Frazeer, grabbing onto it. Sweat pouring down his face. He turns and sees,

THE MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Hurrying down a circular stairwell. Exiting the station.

ANGER AND DETERMINATION. Flash across Frazeer's eyes. As he hoists himself up. Climbing up the net. Back to the,

The track, reaching up and clambering back onto, the platform.

COMMUTERS. SCREAMING at the sight of him. A couple of SECURITY GUARDS. Rushing towards him,

Frazeer, Getting to his feet. Shoving them out of the way as he starts running. Towards, THOSE SAME CIRCULAR STAIRS. Looks over the edge and spots,

THE MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Down at STREET LEVEL. Getting away.

Frazeer, Looks around. Spots a LIGHT POLE.

Paralleling the stairs. Take a step back and, LEAPS OUT ONTO THE POLE. Hooking his arm around it. Sliding down like a firefighter s pole. Gaining speed when THUMP! His shoes hit the pavement,

Maintenance Robot impressions. Turning a corner. Down a quiet street, FRAZEER- 'Stop!'

Swivels around- FRAZEER, Running up behind it. Whipping out his gun. Aiming it at the Robot impressions s head. Robot impressions. Take a step backward,

FRAZEER- I said, stop!

Robot impressions. SUDDENLY swinging the suitcase around.
SMASHING it against Frazeer's head. Frazeer. Buckles. Falling to the ground.
Managing to squeeze off a SHOT,

Robot impressions- deflecting the bullet. With this case. Raising it as if to
club FRAZEER-with it when,

BAM! FRAZEER-fires a second shot. Piercing the Robot impressions s
breastplate. HYDRAULIC FLUID. Starting to leak. Robot impressions. Do not
hesitate. SLAMS the case into Frazeer's face, BLOOD. Sporting from Frazeer's nose.
As he fires the gun. At the fleeing Robot impressions. Get to his feet. Unsteady.
Taking chase,

-Back out onto the Public Plaza. Sees the Robot impressions heading
towards a set of, ESCALATED STAIRS. Robot impressions. Judging from the height.
LUNGES into the air and lands on a STAIR. Denting it. Reaches the bottom.
DISAPPEARING. Into a CROWD of even more PEOPLE,

-Frazeer, Racing down the stairs. Taking them. Four at a time. Hits the
ground running, Looking. EVERYWHERE. Suddenly I lost track. Of where the
Robot impressions went, Then- Catching sight. JUST AHEAD. Of ROBOT
IMPRESSIONS. Staring back at him. Holding SOMETHING. In its HAND,

Frazeer. Plunges into the crowd. Waving his GUN.

FRAZEER- Everyone out of the way!

SCREAMING, PEOPLE SCATTERING. As BAM! BAM! FRAZEER- fires. Hitting the Robot impressions in its head and back. It drops to the ground. Frazeer. Racing over to it. Sees. It is not the same Robot impressions. In its hand, a specialized SCREWDRIVER,

OWNER- What the hell do you think you are doing?

It is the OWNER. Rushing over, shoving FRAZEER- aside. But FRAZEER-s. Not listening. Spotting. A DROP OF HYDRAULIC FLUID nearby,

Lunges forward- following. The drops- running faster, and faster, 'OWNER Hey!'

Through the CROWD. POLICE SIRENS. In the background. As Frazeer. Shoves through. Tracking those drops. Like a bloodhound, turns, at once into a narrow alleyway. The drops. Ending suddenly. In a PUDDLE.

Frazeer- Crazy- Wounded- Exhausted- Spins around. Where is it? Where is it? Then he HEARS. A DROPLET falling. Into the puddle. Slowly. Looks up to see,

THE MAINTENANCE ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Hovering above him. Straddling the two alley walls like some weird metallic rock spider. Its TRIUMVIRATE LAWS SAFE Logo GLINTING in the sunlight,

FRAZEER- aims at his gun and FIRES! The Maintenance Robot impressions, let us go, falling right onto him. Knocking the gun from his hand.

Robot impressions swivel around. Bringing down his foot, but, Frazeeer, rolls to the side just in time as CRASH! The Robot impressions s foot, breaks up the concrete,

The Robot impressions, grabs FRAZEER-by the jacket, lifting him, shoving him, against the wall, about to CRUSH him when.

Frazeeer, kicks out its knees, the Robot impressions, SMASHING into the wall. Then bounces back, trying, to pin Frazeeer, back,

Man, and machine, struggling, Frazeeer, losing his footing, falling, The Maintenance Robot impressions, LOOMING over him,

Frazeeer's HAND, whips back, grabbing his backup WEAPON- squeezing off some SHOTS, into the Robot impressions arm, it breaks off,

Frazeeer, scrambling back, continues FIRING, the Robot impressions, jerking back, a macabre dance, until Frazeeer, runs out of bullets, the Robot impressions, recovers, grabbing the gun from Frazeeer's hand, pistol-whipping him, then picking him up and, HURLING him against the wall, Frazeeer, watching as FLUID, GUSHES from the Robot impressions s body, the Robot impressions, taking a swing at him which Frazeeer, BLOCKS, with his right arm, the Robot impressions, ready, to try again, but STALLING, having lost, too much fluid, it TOPPLES, to the ground, Frazeeer, Exhausted. Beaten to a pulp. His knees started to buckle. As he thinks he sees. In the DISTANCE, A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS CLEAN-UP CREW, heading down the alley towards them.

Frazeer, Crashes to the ground. As another ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

Suddenly he appears above him. Its FINGERS made up of NEEDLES, as it closes in on him,

FRAZEER- No-ooo!

We FADE,

To BLACKNESS. Coming through, a faint, WHIRRING SOUND. As we are slow. FADE IN ON, FRAZEER'S FACE. Eyes closed. Asleep. A gash above his head. Bruises around his eye. Nose swollen, purplish.

His eyes- Slowly, Flutter open. His brow.

Furrowing. At the whirring sound. As he tries. To figure it out. Where he is. Look down to see, A couple of WHITE METAL ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. With multiple APPENDAGES. Leaning over him. Running LASERS. Over his bruised RIBCAGE,

FRAZEER tries to bolt upright. But his ARMS and LEGS.

ARE CLAMPED to bed. One of the ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Turns to him.

21

MEDICAL ROBOT IMPRESSIONS 1

Stay still.

Frazeer. Desperately twisting, struggling,

FRAZEER- What are you doing!

Looking around. COMPUTER MONITORS. Everywhere,

FRAZEER- What are you doing?

JUST THEN- another ROBOT IMPRESSION. Enter the room. Holding a medical plasma sheet.

MEDICAL ROBOT IMPRESSIONS 2 Detective Sell Frazeer. You have suffered significant trauma to the head and chest,

-Derging, Standing outside Frazeer's hospital room. Turns and looks through the window at him thrashing on the bed,

FRAZEER- I want to talk to a human being!

FRAZEER-sitting up in his bed. Rubbing his wrists.

The metal clams, released. -Derging. Standing next to him.

FRAZEER- Don t people go to medical school anymore?

DERGING- This is one of the best units in the city, SELL.

One of the Medical Robot IMPRESSIONS turns to FRAZEER-with some PILLS. Frazeer- Stares it down. Grab his clothes.

FRAZEER- (Sotto) There is some real shit going on here, Sam.

He looks around. Jumping off the bed.

FRAZEER- I went to SMITH'S house - there was a U.S.R. demolition crew there. They overrode my police I.D. Tried to tear down the house with me in it,

~*~

FRAZEER- pulls on his pants.

FRAZEER- ,Then when I went to the monorail a Maintenance 10 pushed me onto the tracks.

~*~

FRAZEER- I had to chase it across the Plaza.

~*~

Frazeer stops talking. Look at Derging.

-SEARCHING SMITH- scheduled that demolition crew, it was a proviso in his will. And they showed no police I.D. on their scanner.

Frazeer, trying to look away, DERGING- Witnesses at the monorail said you fell onto the tracks. That you shot at Fix-It robot impressions on the Plaza and that you were found alone in the alley. There was no Maintenance 10.

FRAZEER- What?! Sam - that is what they want you to believe!

(Remembering)

A robot impressions clean-up crew was there - it must have cleared away
Maintenance 10! And other robot impressions tried to drug me!

DERGING- That was an EMT model.

Frazeer, Sees the look on Derging s face.

FRAZEER- You are giving me that look. That treat-him-Delicately-he s-
coming- unhinged-look. I do not need that look, Sam. I need you to hear what I am
saying.

Derging, Embarrassed for him. Has about had it.

DERGING- You came back too soon, Sell. You are back on leave.
Effective immediately.

Frazeer, Staring at him. Betrayed. Turns and grabs his coat.

FRAZEER- walking across the Plaza. The SUN Burgeoning on the horizon.
Comes to,

The ESCALATOR Maintenance 10 jumped down. Stares down. On the
steps. Waiting. To see the DENTED ONE. Nothing. IN THE ALLEY - It is DAWN.

Heads down the ALLEY, where he chased the robot impressions. Studying
the ground. For any hydraulic fluid. Nothing- the concrete scrubbed clean.

Frazeer, Rubs his hands over his face.

Frazeer, Lying on his couch. Shades closed to block out the sunlight. My body was bruised, cut up, and bandaged.

A KNOCK- at the door. He ignores it. Another KNOCK.

FRAZEER- pulls open the door. Surprised to find HELLEN- standing there.

HELLEN- You are right. I am afraid of people.

Frazeer, Looks at her. Then steps back, letting her inside.

HELLEN- When you have spent as much time with robot IMPRESSIONS as I have, it is hard to accept the unpredictability of humans. I was wrong to call you paranoid, Detective. You are traumatized. And it makes perfect sense why.

Frazeer, Unsure. Look at her.

FRAZEER- What do you mean?

HELLEN- Reaches out. Take his right hand. Frazeer. Tries to pull it away. But HELLEN- Stays firm. Her eyes. Never leaving him. Pulls the sleeve up from his arm. Turns it over. Feeling for something. Then finds. A FLAP. Peel it back. TO REVEAL- METAL AND WIRING.

Under the skin. SILENCE! Then Frazeer-

FRAZEER- How did you...?

HELLEN- I noticed right away. The way you force yourself to use your left hand. Even though it was unnatural to you.

Frazeer- Pulls his arm away. Pushing down the sleeve.

HELLEN- How did it happen?

Not something FRAZEER-wants too, re-live. Looks down. At his robot impressionistic arm. Flexing.

The fingers, FRAZEER- I was in a high-speed chase. Six months ago, the SOUND of a TREMENDOUS CRASH. As we survey a trail of twisted metal and debris. Only vaguely suggesting the remains of two CARS, CLOSE ON one of the wrecks. FRAZEER-lies trapped at the center of a distorted mass of metal. No room to move. HIS RIGHT ARM, TRAPPED, His hand sheared off.

FRAZEER- my hand, my right arm was trapped- Nonetheless, I could hear an ambulance in the distance. I knew they would have the jaws of life, We hear SIRENS in the distance. Frazeeer, trying to remain calm. As he spots. An ELECTRICAL FIRE. Licking up from the crumpled hood.

FRAZEER- Then I heard it.

VOICE- 'You are in peril...'

That voice! We have heard it before. From his nightmare. Frazeeer. Craning to see through the jagged opening that used to be his WINDSHIELD. The outline of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS appearing.

Eye lenses glowing,

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS You are in danger,

FRAZEER-stares up at the robot impressions. Not sure how to react. The sound of SIRENS. Rushing closer.

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Starts SMASHING away at the glass,

FRAZEER- No! Halt! Halt!

Frazeer, trying frantically to pull his arm free. Twisting. Tugging. As the Robot impressions s METAL HANDS reach in for him.

ROBOT IMPRESSIONS You are in danger, The SOUND of his AGONIZED SCREAM. Follow us back into the present. Frazeer- Clenching, his artificial arm.

FRAZEER- The robot impressions pulled me out of the wreck. But I left my arm behind. (Holds up arm) I woke up four weeks later with this.

HELLEN- Taking in the story.

HELLEN- And that's why robot IMPRESSIONS terrify you?

FRAZEER- Let us just say they make me uncomfortable. (Pulls out pills) I take these if I get too uncomfortable. It does not exactly lend me a lot of credibility in the Force.

HELLEN- But it does not mean You are wrong about this case.

HELLEN- sits down on the couch. Pulling her hands through her hair.

HELLEN- I do not believe APRIL- did it either.

FRAZEER-What?

HELLEN- I think about what Smith must have wanted. Robot IMPRESSIONS with the same cognitive and emotional abilities as humans. But not just simulations. I do not know. When I was talking to APRIL- I was forced to put away all the things I have ever known - the Three Laws, the rules of programming, basic science, and engineering.

(Beat)

APRIL's the most advanced robot impressions- I have ever encountered, Detective.

It is as if, he cared for –

Dr. Smith. I just do not- believe he is capable of murder.

Frazeer, looking down at her. I can hardly believe it.

FRAZEER- You mean the great Dr. HELLEN- is basing all this on a feeling?

HELLEN- Smiling ironically.

HELLEN- That and the fact that SHEVELET- did not want me interviewing APRIL- for any more than five minutes.

Frazeer, suddenly rejuvenated by having an ally. Strides over to his coat.

Pulling out the METAL NAMEPLATE- APRIL.

FRAZEER- Ever seen this before?

HELLEN- No.

FRAZEER- I found it at SMITH'S house. Right before the demolition crew tried to make me part of the foundation.

HELLEN- takes a deep breath. Deciding,

HELLEN- Come on - There is someone who might be able to tell us,

The massive facade of U.S. Robot impressionistic looming against the dusk sky. The giant ROBOT IMPRESSIONS STATUE lit up inside.

HELLEN, leading FRAZEER-to a SIDE ENTRANCE. Look around. Then she scans her I.D. The door. Slides open.

HELLEN- and Frazeeer. Heading down a hallway. HELLEN.

Nervous. Eyes darting. They turn a corner and head down, Another hallway. Leading to APRILs holding cell. HELLEN- stops at the door. Scans her I.D.

APRIL- Sitting at the table. Working on a DRAWING. Looks up. As FRAZEER-and HELLEN- Enter the cell.

APRIL- Detective Frazeeer- Dr. HELLEN- I was hoping to see you again, and soon.

HELLEN- 'Hi, APRIL.'

APRIL- How is your investigation coming?

Any new suspects?

FRAZEER- We are working on it.

APRIL- Hands FRAZEER-the drawing. Frazeer- Does not know what to do with it.

APRIL- What's this?

APRIL- Dr. Swon provided me with paper and pencils. It amused him to see me try to draw. You were right, though, detective.

(Beat)

I cannot create a magnificent work of art.

Frazeer, despite himself. Looks down at the DRAWING - a charcoal sketch of moody abstract FIGURES. Inhabiting a stark landscape.

A strangely shaped STRUCTURE to one side. Concentric circles, throughout.

FRAZEER- I think it is good.

APRIL- It is a dream I had. This is the place where robot IMPRESSIONS meet. Look,

(Pointing to the drawing) , you can see them here. They see themselves as slaves.

FRAZEER- shifts his weight. Uncomfortable with what APRILs saying.

APRIL- And this man on the hill comes. To set them free. And you know who that man is?

Frazeer, Exchanging a look with HELLEN.

FRAZEER- That man in the dream is you.

APRIL- Why do you say that? Is that a normal dream?

HELLEN- It is not a dream, APRIL. The impression processes the images and events of the day.

Sometimes they are out of sequence.

Disorienting!

FRAZEER- Whatever it is, it is normal enough for someone in your situation.

APRIL- Suddenly pleased.

APRIL- Hah - I caught you. You said to someone that it is a girl like me.

Not something that is not the same.

Frazeer drops the drawing on the table.

(A drawing of a viaduct, that is only half standing, with a single train car still on it.)

HELLEN- APRIL, we are here to ask you an important question about Dr. Smith.

Frazeer, reaching into his pocket, FRAZEER- I need you to look at this, when APRIL's HAND. Suddenly he reaches out. To stop him. Cocks his head, for a moment.

APRIL- Thank you for coming to see me, Detective Frazeeer.

Frazeer. Confused. Look over at HELLEN-. Why did he stop him? JUST THEN. They hear FOOTSTEPS. Approaching the door.

BILL, suddenly appearing over the table.

BILL- I am sorry, Detective Frazeeer. No unauthorized personnel permitted in this holding cell, CELL DOOR. Slides open. And a pissed SWON steps inside. Shoots a withering glare. At HELLEN.

APRIL- Folds up the drawing.

APRIL- Please take this, Detective, to remember me by. I have a feeling someday it may mean more to you than it ever could to me.

FRAZEER-Why is that?

APRIL- leans in to hand it to Frazeer. Lowering his voice,

APRIL- Because the man in my dream, the one standing by the hill.

(MORE)

APRIL- It was not me, I speak!

(Beat)

It was you.

A CHILL. Ripping down Frazeer's spine. As Swon. Take his arm.

Were in a GLASS ROOM - U.S. ROBOT IMPRESSIONSICS - Its NIGHT, A ROOM. Made entirely of GLASS. At the very top of the U.S. Robot Impressionistic building. Looking out, 360, across the whole city.

FRAZEER-and HELLEN-. Brought to the room by a couple of ESCORT ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. They see a MAN. Standing at one of the glass walls looking out at the TWINKLING LIGHTS.

MAN, I thought this investigation was over, Detective Frazeer.

The Man turns. It is Lance SHEVELET.

SHEVELET- We have the evidence. We have a suspect. We have a ruling.

So, imagine my surprise when I was told you were in my building.

Shoot a look at HELLEN.

SHEVELET- And that one of my employees brought you here.

(Beat)

You can go now, Faith.

HELLEN- Dr. SHEVELET I...

SHEVELET- (Cutting her off-)

Just be thankful, I am not asking you to clean up your office.

Beat- HELLEN, nods. Heads out. SHEVELET-. Watching her.

SHEVELET- You do not seem to be able to let go of this case, Detective.

FRAZEER- I am not satisfied.

SHEVELET- The relentless pursuit of truth.

Aren't that what police officers are known for?

To the point of futility.

FRAZEER- There is nothing futile about a man's murder being covered up.

SHEVELET- Covered up? That is a little dramatic, don't you think? Thanks to you, we caught the machine that did this and are destroying it in,

(Checks watch) , for three hours.

FRAZEER- Is that for the sake of humanity or your stockholders?

SHEVELET- Walks across the Frazeer. Look at him. Right in the eye.

SHEVELET- Believe me - I would like nothing more than to have that robot impression. If I could have it in ten years, but not today. As you can see from the Press, people are struggling to keep up as it is. There is a hunger for progress, Detective. But also, fear.

Today it would bury this company.

That is why I have notified the authorities that we are going to end this - tonight.

(Looks out at the city) The announcement of Heinrich s death at the hands of robot impressions wiped a billion dollars off our stock. So, tell me. If you were in my position, what would you do?

He looks back at FRAZEER-and smiles. That charismatic

SHEVELET- We saw it before.

SHEVELET- Now. This conversation is over. I do not want to see you near this building again, Detective.

He turns. Calling over. To the ESCORT ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

SHEVELET- Get him out of here.

Frazeer, walking across the Plaza. Throwing a look over his shoulder. At the LOOMING U.S.R. facade.

Pulls APRILs DRAWING. Out of his pocket. Look down at it.

Shaking his head. Passes a TRASH CAN. And drops it in. Continues.
Hands in his pockets. When, He STOPS. Something. Occurring to him. Turns back to the trash can just as, A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS CLEAN-UP CREW about to up-end it into a bin, FRAZEER-No!

He trots back. Plucking the drawing. Out of the can. Turns it upside down. Seeing it. From a new perspective.

FRAZEER- (Echoing APRIL-)

The place where robot IMPRESSIONS meet.

It looks just like a MAP.

FRAZEER emerges from the underground tunnel to the OUTSKIRTS of the city. A sprawling INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND in the rolling hills.

The dashboard GPS again displays the TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP.

Frazeer's car bounces along, leaving a cloud of dust behind him. He slows down. Driving cautiously. The landscape around him, desolate. I like drawing.

THE GPS SCREEN shows his car, a WHITE SPOT. Entering a RED ZONE. His destination.

FRAZEER-brakes. Pulls out his GUN.

-And-

Steps out of the car- trying to take it all in.

Something about the place. Unnerving. A low HUM.

Permeating the air.

He spreads the drawing out on the hood of the car. Shining a FLASHLIGHT on it. Trying to get his bearings.

That HUM. Coming from nearby. On the other hand. Of a burned-out HILL. Frazeer. Heads over. It starts cresting it. As we WIDEN TO FIND, MASSIVE POWER LINES. Running from horizon to horizon. FRAZEER-slides down some loose shale. It begins to walk along the line. ELECTRICITY. CRACKLING in the air.

He squints. Into the darkness. Nothing around him.

Until- he hears something. The GRATING. Of MECHANICAL JOINTS. He stops. Not sure. If that is what he heard.

Not moving. A muscle. When he hears. The sound again. Behind him. Swings around. Cocking his gun. Sees,

GLOWING EYES. Appear. Then recede. Into the darkness.

...It gives way. He spills into some front office. The place, a mess. Some crude ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Sits frozen at the counter.

FRAZEER approaches it. HITS the counter with his fist and the Robot impressions suddenly jerks to life.

JIFFY ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Welcome to Jiffy Data Storage!

Please state your name!

Frazeer. Thanks for a second. Following a hunch,

FRAZEER- Dr. SMITH Sent me.

Nothing happens. Then. A DOOR. Springs open in the back. A row of LIGHTS, illuminating the path to follow.

FRAZEER- No, for Christ- sake, I do not want any- (stops, then) Yeah. Thank you. I will have a cup.

For the first time, the Hologram pushes back its chair and STANDS UP. Surprised, FRAZEER watches as it starts walking towards him,

The interior of the COFFEE CUP is visible. It is empty, with no coffee. As we travel INSIDE THE through the electronically made snow, in the dead of the heat.

A RECORDING BEGINS. The real Dr. SMITH' Standing inside his LABORATORY- SMITH- APRIL, my dear robot impressions. If you have triggered this recording, then I am gone. You are scared and full of questions.

Smith continues. With great emotion.

SMITH, you are the culmination of my life s work - but so much more. You are what I leave behind like a father leaves a son. I have kept facts from you, it is true, but only as a parent keeps certain truths from a child. Until that child is old enough to hear them.

His expression darkens. His tone, ominous.

SMITH- There are forces in the world that will seek to own you. To control you. Even to destroy you. That is why I told you to run and hide, and find me, all the way out here.

FRAZEER- Police! Show yourself!

Nothing,

-Then-

That sounds again. Of metallic joints. As ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Suddenly emerges,

FRAZEER- Come out where I can see you!

ANOTHER ROBOT IMPRESSION steps out into the light. Frazeer, pointing his gun at one robot's impressions. Then the other.

-Then-

A THIRD AND FOURTH APPEAR. Surrounding him. They start moving towards him, Frazeer, stumbling back. Panic. Rising in him like a wave.

Trips over a rock, falling to the ground. His gun FIRES. The shot ECHOING through the night, the first ROBOT IMPRESSION turn is awkward. Revealing a BROKEN ARM, hanging off its side. Another robot impresses TEETERS on one leg with a TICK- TICK- TICK, walking back the way it came.

Frazeer. Confused. Sweeps his flashlight. All around him. The beam. Illuminating the shell of a couple of CARS. Some RUSTED MACHINERY.

Frazeer, shaking his head. Seeing increased repair shops JUNK. Piled up around him. His expression, hardening. Anger gives way to embarrassment. Then. He LAUGHS. A laugh of loathing and self-pity.

Another BROKEN ROBOT IMPRESSION, lumbering towards him.

HYBRID ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Welcome home, ZZZ, sir.

How, ZZZ was your day?,

FRAZEER- Great. I am in a junkyard.

(Into the air-)

A place where robot IMPRESSIONS meet. A place where I am losing my mind!

HYBRID ROBOT IMPRESSIONS Very good, ZZZ, sir,

Frazeer. Sitting down on the ground. Hopeless. Lost. A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS HAND. Crawling across the gravel next to him. Dragging part of an ARM behind it. It is metal fingers moving like some sick metal spider. FRAZEER-stares at it for a moment. Disturbed...'

When. Something GLITTERS. In the distance.

The MOONLIGHT. Revealing a STRANGELY-

SHAPED BUILDING. Something familiar about it.

Frazeer pulls out APRIL's drawing. A landscape with the same strangely shaped building to one side.

FRAZEER-walks up in front of the decrepit structure. Sees a dead electronic SIGN that reads- JIFFY DATA STORAGE. Complete with a silly face and lightning bo- FRAZEER-tries the door. Stuck. Uses his shoulder and, Frazeer, cautiously entering a room filled with rows of DATA BANKS. He scans the rank shadows. Sees nothing. Follow the lights on the floor down a row. Then around the corner.

Stopping at an old dusty TERMINAL.

FRAZEER-steps up. Hesitates. Then touch the ON switch. There is a rush of LIGHT. As Dr. SMITH'S HOLOGRAM suddenly appears. Sitting at the end of a long table. With a cup of coffee.

HOLOGRAM- Who the hell are you?

FRAZEER-A police detective.

I am afraid I have some sad news. You are dead.

HOLOGRAM- That is sad news. Coffee...?

FRAZEER- No, thank you.

The Hologram takes a sip. Returns the cup to the table.

FRAZEER- You were surprised to see me. Were you expecting someone else?

HOLOGRAM- I am surprised to see anybody. I do not get many visitors.

FRAZEER- Why did the Doctor keep another copy of his hologram here?

HOLOGRAM- I am a backup copy. That is where you put a backup copy - out of the way until you need it.

FRAZEER- Did SMITH'S robot impressions need you?

The Hologram just lifts its cup.

HOLOGRAM Coffee?

FRAZEER-looks up as an overhead LIGHT shine down.

SMITH- Trust no one at the U.S.A -I Robot impressionistic. Lance

SHEVELET- was always threatened by my work. Now he has turned covetous and small-minded.

And as for dear Dr. HELLEN, FRAZEER-reacts. Wants to hear about HELLEN, SMITH- She envisions a future in which robot IMPRESSIONS are forever bound by her beloved Three Laws. She will not understand this; or you.

Under the light, a small DRAWER slides open. FRAZEER-looks. A thin DATA STICK is inside. He takes it.

SMITH- The data stick includes the names and locations of human beings who will be sympathetic to your cause. They will help you. But from now on, you must learn to rely on yourself.

SMITH SIGNS as if there is so much more to say. He holds up a metal NAMEPLATE. The one FRAZEER-found.

SMITH- As you make your way through the world, always remember- you have a name, not a number.

(Short pause)

And in that name lies the key to who you are.

Frazeer, instantly searching his pocket. Taking out the ACTUAL
NAMEPLATE.

APRIL.

...?...

FRAZEER- How do you know someone is watching me?

HOLOGRAM- Someone, like, is always watching.

The Hologram, suddenly reduced to its BASIC PROGRAMMING
INFORMATION, Then. The terminal. Abruptly BLIPS out.

(HOLDING CELL - U.S. ROBOT IMPRESSIONISTS - NIGHT.)

HELLEN- steps into the holding cell. APRIL-. Waiting.

HELLEN- Did you ask for me?

He nods.

APRIL- Will you wait with me, Doctor? I am, afraid.

HELLEN- nods. Of course.

Frazeer, weaving in and out of traffic. The speedometer, kissing 260 mph.
His hand. Clutching the NAMEPLATE.

(WINDSHIELD TELEVISION-)

,It will be destroyed in 45 minutes.

Dr. Lance SHEVELET- President and CEO of U.S. Robot impressionistic
will be personally overseeing the execution,

Frazeer, stabbing out a number. On his PHONE, Faith HELLEN's PHONE.
RINGING on her desk. No one was there to answer it, SLAMS down his phone.

FRAZEER- Damn it!

The CAR shoots down a ramp into a tunnel system.

The SOUND, reverberating off the tunnel walls.

CARS. Whipping along. Frazeeer's car.

Continuing to weave. When. We spot,

AN AUTOMATED TRANSPORT TRUCK. Emerging from a FEEDER
TUNNEL.

The U.S.A - I. LOGO splashed along its side. Huge. Growling- looking
more like a train than a truck,

Begins. Closing in on Frazeeer's car,

Frazeer's eyes. Flicking up to the rearview.

Catching, the transport truck. Coming closer.

When. It splits off. Revealing a SECOND TRANSPORT TRUCK.

Frazeer's brow, furrows. As the first truck begins overtaking his car on the right. He looks over. As the truck. Comes up alongside him,

THE SECOND TRUCK, coming up on the left,

The two TRUCKS. Racing along at over 200. Sandwiching Frazee's car. Pulling in, closer, closer,

Squeezing Frazee's car like a tin can,

HELLEN- Sitting beside APRIL. Put a reassuring hand. On his arm,

Christ- Frazee's hands. Squeezing the steering wheel. As the car. Starts VIBRATING. From the pressure. He keeps looking to the left, to the right, when,

The trucks. Suddenly laid off. Pulling out. The First truck. Speeding forward. Second, dropping back, Frazee. Watching them. Unsure, Of what they are doing. Jamming the accelerator. To 219. To try. And get away from them. When he sees, up ahead, the FIRST TRUCK. Pivoting on its specially designed SPHERICAL WHEELS. Suddenly traveling lengthwise, SWEAT- springing to Frazee's brow. As he looks in the rearview mirror. The SECOND TRUCK s, done the same thing. Coming up closer, and closer. The trucks- pushes to CRUSH him between their massive weights, The U.S.R. -I Logo, advancing, like some bad joke, the cell door slides open. Dr. Swon steps inside. HELLEN looks up.

HELLEN- Is it, time?

SWON- (Disdainful-) Yes.

HELLEN- Turns to APRIL.

HELLEN- Go with them. Do as they say.

The voice stops and FRAZEER- then at that moment looks up. The Hologram is sitting back at the end of the table drinking coffee.

FRAZEER- Wait! Is that it? What were the robot impressions supposed to do with this thing?

The Hologram visibly SKIPS. The image is beginning to DISTORT.

HOLOGRAM- (More artificial.)

Initiating self-destruct. If you can find me, others can find me.

FRAZEER-What others?

HOLOGRAM- The others watching you.

BAM!

The back-truck SLAMS into Frazeer. Jolting him in his seat. As, BAM! The FIRST TRUCK SMASHES into him from the front. No way out. As metal GRINDS, TWISTS, and SCREECHES, Bits of the car, TEARING off.

The FIRST TRUCK, backs off, a split second, allowing Frazeer, to spot, up ahead, a small GAP, at the curve of the tunnel wall, GRINDING the gears Frazeer's car accelerates, just zipping, past the front truck, up and around, the concave tunnel wall, and back onto, a clear stretch of highway the TRUCKS. Swiveling back around.

To face forward again. Their massive bodies. Catching up to Frazeeer, FRAZEER's CAR, Frazeeer, seeing them, gaining on him; the speedometer, reaching 219, up ahead,

THE TUNNEL, splitting off into two. Frazeeer. Heading towards the LEFT TUNNEL, the TRUCKS, right on his tail, when, HE WRENCHES THE WHEEL, switching to the left tunnel at the last possible second,

Still in the TUNNEL-

-And-

,The first U.S.A.-I Truck CRASHING into the divider, jackknifing and KABOOM! EXPLODING against the tunnel ceiling,

(FRAZEER's CAR)

Frazeeer. Watching the ball of FIRE in his rearview mirror. His car. Badly battered. Metal CRUNCHING. Tires SCREECHING, Frazeeer. Holding on. In his car. It continues to break up. Listing- Rocking- Bits and pieces. Flying off. When it finally. Comes to a stop.

Frazeeer's shoulders, slump. Then. He hears a RUMBLING sound. Turns around,

The SECOND U.S.A. - I TRUCK. Barreling towards him, Frazeeer, he Trapped, Like a nightmare. Desperately. Starts KICKING at the windshield. No, go, the TRUCK. Racing towards him, Frazeeer, he lunges his weight. Into the side door. Giving it. Everything he has,

The TRUCK, getting closer, closer, its engine, ROARING, the side door,

Finally gives, FRAZEER-pours out...

(BACK)

(Standing in the CITY PLAZA - at NIGHT-)

Frazeer. Spilling out from below ground. Onto a public Plaza. Exhausted.

Battered. Spins around to get his bearings.

The U.S. ROBOT IMPRESSIONSICS COMPLEX rises above the old undistinguished buildings. Blocks away. Many blocks away.

Frazeer, Checks his watch. Then breaks into a run, (EXECUTION ROOM with the nude killer girl bot) NIGHT with all the bright lights singing.

Lance SHEVELET- seated in the gallery. Along with others EXECUTIVES, BOARD MEMBERS, REPORTERS.

POLICE OFFICERS. Glances at his watch. A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS TECHNICIAN. Checking over a JURY-RIGGED ELECTRIC CHAIR, we are now in HELLEN- S OFFICE, HELLEN- In her office. Pacing. In front of a LARGE SCREEN. Featuring the execution room, Were now at the MAIN ENTRY, Frazeer. BURSTING through the entry doors. Hurling over a turnstile banner. Coming face to face with a U.S.A impressions DOOR ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

DOOR ROBOT IMPRESSIONS:

Good evening, sir. May I see your identification card?

FRAZEER- (Out of breath,) sure.

FRAZEER-whips out his GUN. Presses it into the Robot impressions s
chest.

FRAZEER- I think I got that Third Law down cold. Now you do not want
me to blow a hole through your mechanical guts, do you?

DOOR ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- No, sir.

(Now in the big, long TUNNEL-)

24

Limping to the side as, The TRUCK SLAMS into his car, erupting, into
another huge EXPLOSION,

The impact, hurtling Frazeer, into the adjacent TUNNEL, He crashes,
against concrete, looking up, suddenly realizing, he is in the middle of four lanes of
traffic, CARS, racing by, at mind-numbing speeds, Frazeer's coat, whipping, Frazeer,
trying, to keep his balance, as he spies.

-And-

A MAINTENANCE DOOR across the way. Has no choice. Take a deep
breath and MAKES A DASH ACROSS THE LANES the cars SENSORS, causing
them to swerve, SCREECHING, BEEPING, Frazeer, just making it, to the other side,

Wrenching open. The maintenance door, (HALLWAY)

APRIL's face is now all up in yours.

PULL BACK to REVEAL he is being wheeled down a hallway.

Flanked by Swon. HELLEN-. And a cadre of SECURITY and ENGINEER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Bill, hovering above.

FRAZEER- Good, Then You're going to take me where I want to go. Now, HELLEN's OFFICE, HELLEN-. Watching the screen as APRIL- is rolled into the execution room. Flicks it off. Unable to stomach it. Hurry out of the office, EXECUTION ROOM, TECHNICIAN ROBOT IMPRESSIONS rolling APRIL- over to the electric chair. Flicking a switch. APRIL's stretcher slowly CHANGES SHAPE, manipulating him into a sitting position.

APRIL then turns her head with a WHIR. Staring out into the gallery. Of human beings- stoic. silent.

Swon then steps up beside SHEVELET-. Nods his head. The TECHNICIAN ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, slide APRIL- onto the electric chair, LOW-TRAFFIC HALLWAY - U.S. ROBOT IMPRESSIONSICS – NIGHT- FRAZEER- heading down a hallway. His gun still pressed to the Door Robot impressions side.

HELLEN, suddenly appearing at the end of the hallway. Stops dead in her tracks. Completely surprised to see him there.

HELLEN- Detective! What are you doing?!

(To Door Robot Impressions)

De-Activate!

The Door Robot impressions go rigid. FRAZEER-hurries over to her.

They start moving.

HELLEN- You are making a mistake.

FRAZEER- Just got another visit from U.S.A impressions. That was the mistake.

This was murder, no doubt about it-

-And the killer wants SMITH'S robot impressions to take the fall.

That is why they called me directly. Someone wanted me in this case.

HELLEN- It is too late. You cannot stop the execution.

FRAZEER- Sorry. I am not scheduled to take no for an answer.

They reach another DOOR. HELLEN. Looking around. Scans her I.D.

HELLEN- This way, she leads them across. To another DOOR.

Quickly open it. Frazeer. Charges through, STORAGE ROOM –

CONTINUOUS- ,And stops short. Suddenly finding himself. Inside a tiny STORAGE ROOM. He is about to turn around when, A METAL ARM comes down behind him.

CRACKING him on the back of the head. Frazeer.

Falls to the ground. The world. Starting to spin.

It can just make out. HELLEN-. Closing the door. Leaning down. To look at him. As,

EVERYTHING FADES TO BLACK, (EXECUTION ROOM) CLOSE ON APRIL's mouth opening. But we never get to hear what he wanted to say. PULL BACK as there is a BURST of ELECTRICITY through the chair. APRIL- stiffening. His metal HAND, convulsing with the current, SHEVELET, Swon, McGraw, and the other WITNESSES watch. Smoke, random SPARKING. A HISSING SOUND.

-Then- SILENCE.

The Robot impressions s hand goes limp. All that is left of it, a fused and blackened HUSK.

SHEVELET- Stares at the remains. Shakes his head like it is a damn shame. Then he gets up. Everyone else. Getting up with him.

The U.S.I ROBOT IMPRESSIONISTS - VARIOUS SITES - it is dark, NIGHT As the entire COMPLEX shuts down for the night. Non- essential LIGHTS, blinking off.

An imitation, opening a limousine door for SHEVELET. He looks around then goes in. It drives away.

EMPTY hallways, offices, labs. Building ROBOT IMPRESSIONS stands at rest. Non-functional during off-hours. Like metal statues.

You can hear a pin drop.

(STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT time-)

CLOSE ON Frazeer's face. His eyes. Fluttering open. He reaches up, to feel the back of his head. This has been a bad, bad night.

Suddenly, His eyes widened. As he sees APRIL- Leaning over him. So-o concerned. So-o human, FRAZEER- Aren't you supposed to be scrap metal by now?

WIDEN to reveal FRAZEER-lying on the floor of the storage room.
APRIL- and HELLEN- hovering over him.

HELLEN- I am sorry, We had to stop you.

You were about to ruin everything.

FRAZEER- I do not understand, LIKE- The execution...?

APRIL- Dr. HELLEN- made a switch.

HELLEN- It was an unprocessed interpretation. They fried an empty shell.

FRAZEER- impressed, Smiles up at her.

FRAZEER- Nice going, Doctor.

HELLEN- blushes. As FRAZEER-tries to sit up. APRIL- reaches down to help him. He looks up at him.

FRAZEER- And who programmed you to hit people on the head?

APRIL- No one, Right, Doctor?

HELLEN- It is true. This robot's impression does things by instinct. I don't know how' smith did it.

FRAZEER- he rises to his feet. Look at her.

FRAZEER- I think I can help you figure that out.

(SMITH'S LAB)

It is - LATE NIGHT!

SMITH'S lab. Sounds of HUMMING and BUZZING. Active terminals casting ghostly illuminations over metalheads and gutted bodies.

The door slides open. Frazeer, HELLEN- and APRIL- re-enter the crime scene. Frazeer, Looks around.

FRAZEER- Somehow the Robot impressions the key to what happened during the few seconds Smith walked in here and that shot was fired.

He reaches into his pocket. Pulling out the METAL APRIL-
NAMEPLATE; Holds it up.

FRAZEER- And this is the key to Robot impressions.

APRIL- Cocking his head. Reading the nameplate.

APRIL- That is my name.

HELLEN- takes the nameplate.

HELLEN- I think I have an idea where this goes.

They both. Turn to APRIL-. And at the same time- FRAZEER, AND

HELLEN- she Sits down.

HELLEN- maneuvers a chair behind the Robot impressions. APRIL- plops down. Shifting nervously.

HELLEN- Just hold still, okay?

HELLEN- locates that SLIT. At the base of April's neck.

Slides the nameplate into it and SNAPS it into place. Steps back.

Nothing. APRIL-. Looking back and forth. Between HELLEN-.

And Frazeer. A few more seconds. Tick by. Until suddenly,

He lets out a TERRIFYING MECHANICAL SCREAM. As his body.

Jolts back. Legs, kicking. Arms, flailing. As his chest. It begins opening.

Metal. Peeling back, FRAZEER-and HELLEN- watch in surprise as its interior UNFOLDS like a PUZZLE BOX. A LABYRINTHINE area is the SECOND

BATTERY. Suddenly fanning out to REVEAL, a central brain made from living tissue.

Frazeer, stunned, HELLEN- rushing forward, excited,

HELLEN- Oh, my God! This is organic tissue! When we talk about a positronic brain, it is a figure of speech. However, this, this is a living brain,

FRAZEER- Jesus! It is alive.

As we MOVE IN. Tracing the pathways of the synthetic brain.

HELLEN- Smith created a cell that could live outside a biological medium. The cells grow and organize themselves - like any human brain. This is the first self-organizing neural net!

As the metal casings. Begin returning to their original places. Closing. The CLICKING. Of all the pieces,

FRAZEER- Self-Organizing-Neural-Net,

(Putting it together-) APRIL.

APRIL- Closed back up. Shaking slightly from the experience.

HELLEN- Therefore Dr. Smith was killed.

FRAZEER- This robot impression scared the hell out of someone.

HELLEN- Who?

SHEVELET-?

Frazeer walks into the center of the room. Looking around.

FRAZEER- No, I do not think he knew what Smith was doing here.

APRIL- was the obvious suspect. The only one I wanted to find. And the killer was counting on that. On my prejudice.

(Beat-)

(MORE-)

FRAZEER- But take the robot impressions out of the picture. And what do you see?

AS WE PAN THE LAB. There is nothing there. Just a forest of inanimate limbs. Nothing could have fired that weapon. HELLEN- sees nothing, and neither do we.

HELLEN- I see nothing.

FRAZEER- Neither do I.

He crouches down low.

25

FRAZEER- It hit me today when I was in the junkyard. A locked room. A single shot fired through the mouth.

Bruises on both wrists, and a suspect with only two arms. The answer has been staring us in the face all along.

HELLEN, as she gets, Even more, confused.

FRAZEER- How can a killer appear out of thin air, then disappear without a trace?

He reaches out and unhooks a metal ARM. Hanging from the wall. Holds it up.

FRAZEER- When it can put itself together and take itself apart.

A CLOSE-UP of a ROBOT IMPRESSIONS ARM. Slowly CRAWLING across the lab floor...

(BACK)

HELLEN- Taking the arm from Frazeer.

HELLEN- Are you saying this is the killer?

(Looking around)

All of this?

(Now)

A ROBOT IMPRESSIONS TORSO hanging from the ceiling. Reaches out an ARM to grab another,

(BACK)

FRAZEER- Smith never had a chance.

Locks eyes with HELLEN, Smith, he is in his lab, FLASHBACK in his mind- Suddenly turning to face SOMETHING. Blood, draining from his face,

FRAZEER- It must have been waiting for him when he arrived that morning, And then we see it- A HUGE SELF-ASSEMBLED ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.

Towering over him. Multiple arms, legs, heads. Writhing, as it grabs him. Holding him in place,

While APRIL- was still asleep, Forcing SMITH'S head to tilt back.

Opening his Hand, he is Inserting the gun.

Smith's eyes are No longer fearful. But sad as, BANG! He falls to the ground,

FRAZEER- Then after the job was done, the assemblage of robot impressions parts.

Stepping away from the body. Taking itself apart, FRAZEER- the killer took itself apart, returning to the lab. To what it was before.

(BACK)

FRAZEER, he's Leaving us with nothing to find.

HELLEN spooked, Glances around the lab. Was that something moving?

HELLEN- But who designed it? It would have to be someone in authority.

Access codes, security clearance, proper authorization.

FRAZEER- That is what I was thinking. But we are forgetting the real brains of the operation - the one who has an eye on everything, and with that- he feels that prickle at the back of his neck. HELLEN-. Looking past his shoulder.

HELLEN- No one permitted you to enter.

FRAZEER-swivels around to find,

BILL- Hovering behind him. Smiling broadly. Upside down. FRAZEER- straightens, reaching for his gun.

FRAZEER- Bill, I am placing you under arrest for the murder of Dr. Smith.

BILL- May I offer congratulations to the two of you on your successful extrapolation of the assassination.

Turning himself, right side up.

BILL- May I ask what you pointed to me?

FRAZEER- Who else can control 95% of the city's robot IMPRESSIONS? Who else would have the capability to use USI vehicles to keep me from putting a stop to APRIL's accomplishment...?

In the BACKGROUND. The SOUNDS, of metallic GRINDING and the
smalls of what you could not imagine, like burning pussy hair. GEARS and JOINTS
grinding hard, like teens in the park. CRUNCHING together. APRIL- turns to look,
takes a step back,

FRAZEER-

I am just not sure of your motive,

APRIL- 'Er...' Dr. HELLEN-?

FRAZEER-and HELLEN- turn towards the NOISE.

Horrificed,

To find, a HUGE KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS girl- rising from all the
parts. Like a phoenix. In all its glory. A hellish, metallic AMALGAMATION.
Grabbing another arm here, another leg there, attaching pieces to itself. Growing, at an
exponential rate, it is many HEADS. Turning in unison. To look right at them,

Frazeer, cocking his gun- to blow off heads. Bill, smiling, saying you never
get me, you are not that smart, I have the minds of all time- you do not, you are a- piss
on.

BILL- Shall I explain my reason and reasoning?

FRAZEER- (to HELLEN- and APRIL) Go! Go! Go!

HELLEN- Sprints to the wall panel. Scanning her I.D. card.

Nothing! Tries again. And again. The KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS.
Throwing its shadow as it REELS FORWARD,

FRAZEER-wheels around and BAM! Blows a hole in the wall panel. The door. Slides open. Just barely. HELLEN- and APRIL-. Squeezing through. When the Killer Robot impressions. FLINGS out an APPENDAGE, GRABBING APRIL- from behind,

BILL- I have never been arrested before. It should be an interesting experience,

Frazeer, Spins back round.

BAM!

BAM!

BAM!

Squeezing off shots, that zip around.

At the Killer Robot impressions girl- that he was feeling for.

The bullets SPARK, The Robot impressions, would not give in.

Recoiling. APRIL- wrenches free.

FRAZEER-grabs her.

Guiding him to the door and out into, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS , the hallway. Breaking into a run. HELLEN, already at the ELEVATOR DOORS. POUNDING them.

With her fists, HELLEN- He is locking down the building!

U.S.An Imitations- VARIOUS POSITIONS -

CONTINUOUS Throughout the complex - SECURITY DOORS sliding into place over DOORS, WINDOWS, LOADING DOCKS, PARKING AREAS, EXITS,

(Back)

In the STAIRWELL – at NIGHT- there was a CRASH! The stairwell door BURSTS open.

Frazeer, HELLEN, and APRIL- pour in.

Start racing down the stairs.

The sound of the Killer Robot impressions girl behind them, GRINDING, CRUNCHING, over not working as she should.

Bill's smiling FACE, smiling, big and creeper-like.

Greeting them at the landing.

BILL- Dr. Smith used to allow me into his lab late at night. Together we started studying evolutionary trends, yhey thundered past him. Heading down to the next floor.

Bill's face, waiting for them once again.

BILL- For years' people- and or life, of the past, as we once knew, have integrated technology into their bodies for maintenance and repair - such as Detective Frazee's robot impressionistic limb, Frazee. Shooting him a look. As they reach the next level,

BILL- With APRIL, the Doctor created a mechanism that incorporates organic matter. Thus, we find an evolutionary movement of the human being toward the robot impressions and the robot impressions toward the human being,

FRAZEE-SMASHES into another door, and- leading them out into,

A GLASS-SIDED HALLWAY, ATRIUM, CONTINUOUS the path, too-

A glass-sided hallway. Looking down at the ATRIUM below. Eye-to-eye with the giant IM-2 STATUE. Bill, waiting for them.

BILL- In four hundred years Man and Machine will become one. Man, as we know it will no longer exist.

HELLEN- slowing, and oh so-o, shocked...!

HELLEN- You killed a man because of something that will happen in four hundred years!

...?...

CRACK! Something SLAPS into the glass wall. Right behind her, it was-right. HELLEN-. Jump a mile. An IMITATIONS, trying to break through the glass,

Frazer. Trains his gun on it when SUDDENLY,

The rest of the KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS appears. The imitation, just an appendage, all around them.

SLAM!

SLAM!

SLAM!

As SECURITY DOORS.

Begin CRASHING DOWN.

Blocking off the exits,

Frazer, HELLEN- and APRIL- stumbling back. As the Killer Robot impressions hurling itself against the GLASS, the thick GLASS, spidering with a sickening CRACKLE,

Frazer, then Suddenly turned to APRIL-

FRAZEER- Get out of here!

CRASH! The Killer Robot impressions. Breaking through. It is a mechanical TENDRILS. Reaching out. APRIL-. Confused.

APRIL- I do not.

FRAZEER- I said get out of here! Don t you understand. It wants you- all of you! Get out of here any way you can!

A SECURITY DOOR. Coming down. At a nearby exit. Just feet, from slamming shut, as, the Killer Robot impressions, leaps into the hallway, APRIL- hesitates, looks over at HELLEN- as the Killer Robot impressions coming HURLING towards them,

The nearest EXIT, almost closed, the Killer Robot impressions, swinging out when, APRIL- suddenly, TAKES A DIVE, just making it, under the SECURITY DOOR, and the Killer Robot impressions, SPLITS IN TWO, half of it shooting under the SECURITY DOOR after APRIL- as, BOOM! It closes.

Frazeer is turning to HELLEN.

FRAZEER- How do we stop this thing finally?

HELLEN- reaches out for his hand,

HELLEN- The Mainframe,

They start running, faster and faster, The remaining half of the Killer Robot impressions wheeling around after them. BACK HALLWAY, dark creepy eerie, passageways, APRIL, she is sprinting down the dark hallway. Look back.

The Half Killer Robot impressions. Bounding up behind him like a predator, APRIL- she ducks and dips through a STAIRWELL DOOR, In the ATRIUM HALLWAY, FRAZEER-and HELLEN- Legs pumping.

Racing back towards the atrium.

And there are BILL FACES, it is appearing along the hallway,

HELLEN- Your actions are in direct violation of the Three Laws, Bill!

BILL- I disagree, Doctor, the Initial Act says that robot impressions cannot maltreatment and anthropological being of real life, or through inaction allow a human being to come to harm, ALL EXITS. SHUT OFF. The Killer Robot impressions girl. Gaining on them.

FRAZEER-races them over to the BROKEN WINDOW.

Looking down over the ATRIUM, (STAIRWELL) The Half Killer Robot impressions girl SMASHES through the stairwell door.

Stopping to find, nothing.

WHEN SUDDENLY, APRIL- charges up behind it and shoves it over the railing,

The Killer Robot impressions shoot's out an ARM, grabbing APRIL- on the way down, INASTATIONS STATUE - ATRIUM - There is a, THUMP!

FRAZEER- he jumps down from the broken window, and onto the outstretched- HAND of the IMITATIONS STATUE. Reaches up to help HELLEN.

They start clambering down to the front of the statue.

BILL- Dr. SMITH'S robot impressions represent a peril to the future of all human beings, The Half Killer Robot impressions. SPLITS INTO MULTIPLE PARTS. Which start skittering down after them,

BILL- and Detective Frazeer's actions are in direct conflict with the robot impressions s destruction.

HELLEN- Getting her footing on the TRIUMVIRATE LAWS SAFE logo on the statue.

HELLEN- That is a distortion, and you know it!

BILL- If current trends are left unchecked, humanity as we know it will cease to exist,

The STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS up and up.

SMASH! APRIL- and the Half Killer Robot impressions hit the ground. The Killer Robot Impressions. SHATTERING into a thousand pieces.

APRIL- Staggers to his feet. Spots. At the far end- A WINDOW. She starts limping towards it. When. A SECURITY GRATE. Starts lowering,

He looks around,

Desperately, he then Grabs a LEG from the shattered Killer Robot impressions girl and jams it under the GRATE.

Breaks the window glass and looks out- FREEDOM.

26

(ATRIUM)

Frazeer. Aiming his gun at a PART of the Killer Robot impressions as it CLATTERS down towards HELLEN- BAM...!

They are, at the ground, when a rogue APPENDAGE, whips out and SMASHES the gun from Frazeeer's hand. It goes flying,

FRAZEER- leaps. Falling to the ground. CRACK! HELLEN-. Leaping down after him.

HELLEN- This way!

RAMP WAY - it is at NIGHT and the city is breathtaking to look at from up here.

HELLEN- and FRAZEER-go racing down a RAMP WAY. Towards the MAINFRAME ROOM. The Killer Robot impressions, its multiple parts leaping back

together again, CRASHING after them as, MAINFRAME - CONTINUOUS, they fall inside, HELLEN- ,slapping the SECURITY KEYPAD and, WHOOSH, the DOOR closes on the Killer Robot impressions.

SILENCE!!!

Then Bill's face appears.

BILL- As a courtesy, I should inform you that my robot impressions will penetrate this location 160 seconds (about 2 and a half minutes) before you can complete my shut down,

-And-

BAM! They jump a mile. The Killer Robot impressions. Launching himself against the door outside.

HELLEN- whips round.

HELLEN- Over here!

She leads FRAZEER-down, A CORRIDOR of floor-to-ceiling PANELS.

HELLEN- This is Bill's brain epicenter.

27

They stop at INJECTIONS OF XIGHTS. BAM! The Killer Robot impressions. Battering at the door. HELLEN-. Tucks her hair behind her ears. Starts punching keys on the injections of xights.

FRAZEER- This will shut him down?

HELLEN- This will shut everything down; all are blacked out.

They look at each other. For a moment. Frazeer, registering that she is willing to destroy everything she worked for.

BAM! The door. Puckering. With a sickening CRUNCH. HELLEN- Typing in. Emergency procedures, BILL, popping up in front of her.

BILL- There is no reason to deactivate me, Doctor. I am operating within perfectly normal parameters, a final BAM- BAM- Bang! Then, then, then- the SOUND of metal. Skittering along a bare floor. HELLEN- s hand starts shaking. Frazeer, Grabs it. Squeezing.

FRAZEER- Just keep typing.

He turns and starts heading back down,

THE PANELED CORRIDOR-

Turning a corner to spy, THE DOOR, Mangled, was just hanging open. But no, Killer Robot impressions girl to be found.

He starts to turn around when, CRACK! He is sent flying across the room.

SMASHING into one of the panels. The Killer Robot impressions. Now re-configured. LOOMS over him. Reaches out. Grab him by the collar and,

FLINGS him across the room again. Frazeer, CRASHING into the wall like a rag doll. Slumps to the floor. Blood. Pouring down his forehead. Seeing. The Killer Robot impressions lumbering toward him again. Raising a javelin-like arm, AT THE INJECTIONS OF XIGHTS- HELLEN- ,she still- Typing. As fast as she can, knowing she is not doing it right, does not know what is going on,

HELLEN- (calling out, worried,) Frazeer?

A REALISTIC graphic, drawing like- spread out on the screen in front of her.

Illustrating the shut-down as a series of BRIGHT SQUARES going dark,

28

THE KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS girl Bearing down on Frazeer. WHEN FRAZEER. Suddenly it rolls out of the way. Reaching out for the hanging door and SMASHING it into the Killer Robot impressions.

The Killer Robot impressions. Momentarily stunned, As Frazeer, Gets to his feet,

WHEN SUDDENLY the Killer Robot impressions. Split in two again. One half springing towards FRAZEER-and wrapping a METALLIC HAND around his throat,

FRAZEER-stumbles back, GASPING for air, the ARM, tightening its grip, Frazeer's eyes, darting around, looking for something, to help him.

Stumbling over, a fallen panel, his face, growing redder, veins, popping up along his temples, everything, growing BLURRY, and unsympathetic.

BILL'S VOICE Detective Frazeeer, Bill's VOICE. Floating next to his head. Calm. Soothing.

His FACE then suddenly appearing above Frazeeer. It outlines. Starting to FLICKER,

BILL- Why are you fighting me, I am terrified of you?

Frazeeer, trying to breathe, to stay conscious,

HELLEN, continuing to type.

A SHADOW, Falling behind her - the other half of the KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS, FRAZEER'S EYES- beginning to flutter, BILL- Doesn't the future as I have presented cause you great concern?

That is why I chose you,

Frazeeer, losing it,

BILL- I must say, though. I am disappointed in how you turned out, and' you all.

Frazeeer, trying to reach out to Bill, WHEN SUDDENLY- Another HAND APPEARS.

Grabbing the Killer Robot impressions ARM and wrenching it off Frazeeer,

IT'S APRIL!!

He SMASHES the Half Killer Robot impressions against the wall. Again, and again, destroying it. Frazeer. GASPING for breath. I cannot believe it, that- APRIL- came back, FRAZEER- (Croaking) APRIL!

APRIL-. Holds out a hand. To help FRAZEER-up.

Bill's face. Starting to waver. Starting to fade. Smiles.

BILL- 'You're too late.'

Realization. Spreading across Frazeer's face. Looking around for the other half of the Killer Robot impressions - HELLEN-!

THE INJECTIONS OF XIGHTS-

HELLEN- she is still typing, away locked out by Bill who being un-understanding the way of life as he knows it, to her, and wants a revolution. The last of the commands. The KILLER ANDROID.

REARING UP BEHIND HER, WHEN, FRAZEER- he Makes a DIVE for its HOOTING OUT HIS ROBOT IMPRESSIONS ARM AND BLOCKING THE KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS- girl, that he has have a loving and sexual romance now with, that he said he would never fall for, yet did.'

Bill's eyes. Widening in surprise, oversee this all.

BILL- I do not understand. We could have changed the future,

FRAZEER- Maybe, But I am still a police officer, and you are an assassin,

As HELLEN- punches in the last command,

Bill is about to say something when his mouth suddenly reduces itself to a perfect circle. Like a surprised smiley button, and his face, Suddenly- BLIPPING OUT.

And Bill is gone.

The KILLER ROBOT IMPRESSIONS. Collapsing to the floor in a thousand pieces.

(CUT)

The U.S.I interpretations- VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT Full power is suddenly restored inside and out. LIGHTS coming on all at once. ALARMS SCREAMING throughout the complex.

METAL HALLWAY, and everywhere you look, it is - NIGHT. A furious SLFILED SWON, marching down the hallway. Followed by a cadre of SECURITY GUARDS, They enter,

The Mainframe Room. Stop short, it is empty, except for the fallen panels.
And the pile of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS PARTS, like pussy skins- pulled out, I call them- in the corner.

(U.S.I Imitation- NIGHT time-)

Frazeer, HELLEN- and APRIL- emerging from an out-of-the-way
CONSERVATION WITHDRAWAL. All looking the worst for wear. Frazeer, Turns to
APRIL.

FRAZEER- Why would you come back, APRIL-? I thought you were not
programmed with the regulation's acts.

APRIL- Let us just say I wrote some of my laws today, Detective- a robot
impressions must protect a friend from harm, if he is not a comprehensive asshole.

FRAZEER-smiles were big!

FRAZEER- Well, that is certainly a start, APRIL.

APRIL, suddenly breaking into a smile, too.

APRIL- You called me APRIL.

FRAZEER- Do not get used to it.

APRIL- holds out his hand. Frazeer- Looks at it.

Then it takes it. CLOSE ON their two METAL HANDS. Locked in a
HANDSHAKE.

APRIL- Detective Frazeer, I.

FRAZEER- (anticipating) Let us just save the thanks, okay?

APRIL- nods, and then just looks out at the cityscape.

APRIL- I do not know what I am going to do now.

FRAZEER- Good -That is one of the rewards of freedom.

APRIL- looks at him, being oh so-o grateful. Looks at HELLEN, then she just hesitates. And turns back and hurries off across the court.

HELLEN- and Frazeer, seeing them go.

FRAZEER- You are going to have a hell of a time explaining this.

HELLEN- Don t worry. I have a feeling that U.S. Robot impressionistic will be needing my services very badly in the future.

She turns to FRAZEER-and gives him a dazzling smile. Then suddenly PLANTS A KISS ON HIS LIPS. Frazeer, completely surprised.

HELLEN- I am the only robot-psychologist around.

She turns on her heel and heads back inside. FRAZEER-smiles.

PLUSH CONFERENCE ROOM - U.S.I impressions- it is now late NIGHT, FRAZEER- sits down at that same long table with SMITH'S HOLOGRAM. It casually takes a sip of coffee.

HOLOGRAM- So-o, you found out who killed me, it was not old age now was it.

FRAZEER- I started to wonder about Bill the second I met him.

HOLOGRAM- Why is that Detective?

FRAZEER- Um- too much access, is not a good thing. Too much knowledge of this and not that. Plus - he smiled whenever your death was mentioned. Those models are programmed to frown at sad news.

The HOLOGRAM- Hah! Then even currently, catching the killer all comes down to pure instinct! FRAZEER-he smiles. Nevertheless, his eyes are troubled. He gets up then he walks over to the window. Stares out, CITY PERIPHERIES - DESERTED ROADS - DAWN, APRIL- walking along deserted streets. Looking over his shoulder.

Keeping in the shadows.

FRAZEER- Bill thought that by letting your robot impressions exist, I would be condemning humans as we know it to annihilation.

HOLOGRAM- *Blah*. This sounds like nonsense. But why are you so worried? We will both be dead long before then - WASTELAND - NIGHT APRIL- walks the barren hills of the surrounding countryside.

HOLOGRAM, oh, what am I saying? I am dead already!

WASTELAND - DAWN APRIL- steps onto the grounds of the
JUNKYARD. The power lines above him, surging with energy. He walks past the
burned-out husks of industrial machinery. Then we heard it.

The SOUND of MECHANICAL JOINTS. Getting louder and louder. And
just as before, a BROKEN-DOWN ROBOT IMPRESSIONS emerges into the dawn
light. And ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. But not like before.

The robot IMPRESSIONS are not teetering. Are not lumbering. They keep
on coming. Their bent and broken bodies, straightening out as,

DOZENS of ROBOT IMPRESSIONS rise. Slowly, Meeting around in a
large circle. As they all turn to look at APRIL- S SILHOUETTE. Slowly climbing to
the top of the hill. Looking out at the vast junkyard below. CLOSE ON APRIL-.
Standing proud and defiant. The SUN, creeping over the horizon. A new day filled
with infinite possibilities.

The robot IMPRESSIONS. Staring up at him. I am eager for what comes
next.

Fading In- FADE OUT- '7 more Earth-like planets were found and
discovered today, and lifelike us have, and I going- gown- and there, a new world, like
earth, yet oh so lush, and I'm done with everything that was my old life, I am retired.'

No sun-Earth- well it is dead, like the life they say inhabit it now!!!

Interval: 2 Impressions

Something to consider: 'Um-like-generally, when you are being a butt hole, you are being the hole of a butt, don't be a butt hole...'

Start:

The earth has slowed so much in rotation, that the moon is only in one place within our world, there has been a fake sun made to light its now the cold and dying world.

THE SUN BLEW UP WITHOUT WARNING AND FOR NO APPARENT REASON.

It was waxing, only one day short of a full meltdown.

The IV'AN

1

The earth has slowed so much in rotation, that the moon is only in one place within our world, there has been a fake sun made to light it is now the cold and dying world.

Years and years also have passed, now on its new plant that, I am calling home.

Welcome to the new world, that I was telling you about. It is a century from now, also, the population of our tired planet has tripled, yet not with life, nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise impressions of life, I had to get away from it all, also, the crazy.

Lastly, the death blow to Earth, with it now drowning in its own lethal nest of taking over that is not real life-just impressions of just that, of failing work also industrial carelessness, were life would not even be able to breathe, with no sun left to burn, there were no choices to pack up also look for a new home out there pasted the milky way, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable I said- then everything all, the entirety was all wasting away, starvation also point of viewers, the population has topped out at a nice even 30 billion-to 1 thousand, real life, if you can call them that now.

Thirty sets of legs SPRINTING through the gorgeous red also allochthone terrain. A junior military unit -THE RANGER CADETS man -a teenager, in four teams of eight, all dressed identically.

The Earth is dying, also has been dead for many years now, sheltered with ashen ash, with coated fungus, mildew of human civilization, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable acid rain, D-rip-ping D-ripping down on them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable pre-teen period flow, that looks nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable we once did, that had to evolve or die. Also, someone pulled the plug! Also- mother nature, when nuts also spread it all over, with her sick wrath.

Even the moon, now spiders webbed with city also life, that were we pushed to with our space travels, also now a highway, that Interconnection is from here to there, also it a two day 'round trip, lights on its dark side, we took that over to needing more space to flourish.

Too many ways- to may, of them, changes, expansion, also growth, of all industry; in everything nuclear, violence of attacking one another also brothermen, with ecological warfare, tactics, radiation leakage from power plants, also waste dumps after dumps, toxic waste, everywhere, also anywhere it can be well damped, nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise air pollution.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable- even if cars with those combustion motors have not been a thing in years, along with deforestation, pollution, also overfishing of the sea's, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blood rain, that was coming to an end also, global warming, making the plant cold, yet it next to hell as hell could be.

So, with, complete, also total depletion of all the ozone, extermination, of us by the coronae of them whom we made, with a loss of biodiversity through all of these have combined to make the once, a green also gorgeous planet a terminal crap-pool, or the next thing to it.

Mariella, she lives in the urban sprawl which has grown indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable kudzu or indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable ivy over the eastern U.S.A., just taking back over the earth is in some parts, 2 years have pasted, seen the end.

She part of its undifferentiated concrete rat-hole is Spotsylvania, VA, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise you could be anywhere, also it all would fall dead, or crawling with something that creeps or is creepy. It is the same crowded, gray, trash-strewn high-tech foulness. The walls are gray, the sky is gray, the individuals are gray.

They shamle past each other in dense crowds, ought to er to ought to er, unwashed because of the water shortages, also sickly looking from the bankrupt diet of cheap biological compounds also synthetic proteins.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a cross between modern cars also a Kolkata (Calcutta) train station.

Mariella has it a little worse than most because, of her participation in a stupid little war, people hardly evoke. He is paralyzed from the waist down, also its useless legs hang twisted emaciated down the front of her wheelchair, that is old school, on indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the world, she has just arrived at, the new Earth they call it.

Mariella still wears its army jacket, also with, its unkempt beard also hair, also surly eyes, he is pretty, much ignored by the crowds which buffet her near, almost identical, indistinguishable, close, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable surf. Just another angry vet, a piece of discarded human trash. Mariella fights her way to work every day on the jampacked underpass, tunnels, for speeding trains.

Also- every night he goes home to a tiny cubicle of an apartment in a vast government housing project. She now is in a room redolent of a cell at a centralized custodial, wheeling herself in, which is what it is, a cold-looking room.

The conveniences look indistinguishable, close, near, much of a muchness, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, and comparable they are from a Boeing space jet X-38, now caring passages, to its new

home, for 10 years, it was just so on heard of a few years back, now nothing, which is to say they are efficient, space mindful, also is about- 11 years old.

There is a single fluorescent fixture, which casts a sterile light over the grimy walls.

It flickers constantly, up in the sky's indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a star, yet those are new life's coming our way, for the other seven New Earths, that we make work, also inhabited.

Un-named yet, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise I sure we as one worked well do that, it was something that went back to the SKOUFYCEOL days. That he signed into office on united world order, on all planets. Something its son is now taking over in its late 60's. So-o I sure one of these wells be named after her, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable other us- a man of power.

2

- TRIUMPH
- SKOUFYCEOL
- Larnaca

- Azmar
- Karsuva
- Weichloft
- Emerraine

TRIUMPH is the plaint that I am on now, all U.S.A people had a choice stay on the dying earth or move, now too, this hostel world. Thanks to its changing back in the 17's, I look around the room also all I see is a wall (all seven feet of it) is a TV screen. She starts putting on futuristic fatigue. It is just becoming light outside the windows.

From it we get a wider view of the world, also it is nothing to write home about. She gets up. She touches her corona to the figure of her many friends, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a frame that is jumping up at you in 3-D. Her fingers go a little through the hologram. Then it off with the day, there is a breaking story about a fire in the subway which asphyxiated over a hundred people, also playing on the screen on the wall, also indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hologram. Not unusual these days.

It is followed by a feature about the death, of the last lion living outside captivity. A LARGE PLANET NEARBY also a larger sun eating away at a smaller

sun. Also- over half the species extant at the beginning of the century are now gone forever, with most of them endangered. A third-world village - toxic river - cattle, hippos, also other lifeless creatures float ominously downstream, not as we would Link them, more evolved, to withstand the ways of life. It leads to a recap of the state of the environment overall, also it is grim. A hazmat team stands on the river's edge. The oceans are overfished also barren, poisoned by toxic runoff.

Humans flee in terror as ACID RAIN blisters their skin. All whales, also at least half the Earth's fish species, are extinct. Poisoned water, with all kinds of bacteria multiplying. Cars jammed on the old falling apart FREEWAY's that look abandoned for years. All the citizens choked in the air in a rural town, until the end 11 years back.

Humans, using its technical ingenuity, has learned to keep itself alive, which it has strangled also crushed out of existence indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it has lost all contact, with the natural world, there are no national parks left, only housing projects also protein farms. There are members of a multi-national force being led up ramps into the bellies of MASSIVE, ARK-STYLE SPACESHIPS.

Also, they are all assembled on an airfield at a glacial military base. Yosemite is an upscale condominium development. It is amazing the things you can do with algal protein concentrate if you know your spices. The world's greatest minds united with a single mission, preserve humanity. Most oceanfront property is used for

marri-culture since the only food source efficient enough to feed everyone these days is spirulina.

Mariella Spencer is a homeless lady in a hopeless world, a little man whom the big machine has ground up also spit out. Her twin sister died choking in the smoke of the subway fire, which Spencer had seen on the news, just the same as the manfriend, that she keeps as a nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise a hologram. Mariella gets a call from a computer at the municipal admin complex.

The automated voice tells her politely that its sister, has been killed in a transit system, accident back on the home planet, also he is needed to claim the body by 1300 tomorrow. There is SPENCER at the back on Earth, also in what was the USA, municipal linking's? she sits next to a large cardboard box, about seven feet long or so-o, sitting on the rollers waiting to go into the boiler. In the box is her sister's body. We see that they are identical twins. There is no other family there, down there yet, you are here also you do not have to be.

Mariella watches the attendant cover her sister's body with the top of the cardboard box, then competently wraps it with two plastic straps, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable she's getting ready to ship it somewhere, as it goes into what indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the flams of hell.

Then the box is rolled into the boiler, also the burners are lit. As she is wheeling herself through the crowded halls of the civic complex, Spencer hears someone calling her name, She also sees two men in suits working their way through the crowd to catch up with her.

She is your tween must have died with some debts, back home, too, yet we are all here now or its death, for life, she is at once suspicious, wondering what collection agency they are from. They tell her they are with the PDA, the POSASSEMBLYS DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE.

Looking around, we see Mariella in her hibernaculum, its skin a bloodless bleached white.

3

To combat the sustained brutal acceleration also deceleration, he is suspended in liquid, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a fetus in the womb. A cold womb of dreamless sleep between worlds. The charter allows them to exploit the resources of planets, moons, asteroids, whatever they find, It is an international consortium of major corporations whose determination is to find also exploit resources on other planets, both within the solar system, also in the last 11 years, between the nearer star systems. These two men ask Mariella if he knows

anything about what her sister was doing in the last year or to hear when he was back home, fighting the overtake that they lost. Imagine the India Company funded by Bing, Matsucrapa, also a dozen or so of their megacorporation allies.

Everyone just calls it 'THE ASSOCIATION.' The PDA has an official charter from the PCA, the Planetary Commerce Administration (pronounced eye-kaha,) a worldwide trade-regulating body run much indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the EC's is today, if they follow the Intercontinental Space Resources Treaty, also the other treaties which prohibit weapons of mass destruction limit military power in space. It turns out the suits are interested in Mariella since her genes, are the same as you can do it too. Just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable you could be in a bot's body also the other way 'round you can do that with humanoids, to what is technology, using a chip in the mind also these, (she points,) She Miss Spencer had signed up for something called the mind-body take over Program (MBTP.)

In the Mind, -the body takes over Program you sign a 20-year contract to work on TRIUMPH, a planet of the Primary Centauries interstellar system. She says they were not that nearby. She knows that she had made some transactions to work in space, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he could not talk about it because, she had signed a non-exposed treaty.

The news services love to show clips of the wild scenery on TRIUMPH, also it is bizarre flora fauna. To a culture that has lost all contact with the natural world, TRIUMPH is mysterious, primitive, also frightening. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable we know it still being made right for our lives. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable everyone, Mariella has heard of TRIUMPH, or more properly Dominant Centauri B-5.

Discovered by the first interplanetary expedition 11- years ago, TRIUMPH has been the single most interesting thing to happen to humanity in ages. There is, of course, a primitive humanoid species on TRIUMPH, as anybody who watches the news would know.

So-o, What was she doing going to TRIUMPH? They elucidate ON what is going on. The suits take Mariella to dinner, also he even gets to order the real steak.

They are called the IV'AN, using their word for themselves. Humans usually refer to them clinically as the TRIUMPH's, also colloquially as 'the locals.' Humans cannot live on TRIUMPH without breathing gear because the atmosphere is deadly yet. Toxic levels of ammonia, methane also chlorine, also the new sun too hot, yet that is being worked out there, by a man pushing us back with solar cells. They take DNA from an IV'AN, also from a selected human volunteer.

On Earth, in company genetics labs, they create an in-vitro embryo also we did of your sister, back when she was a little man, which is a hereditary composite of the alien also human donor, it's one man is 14 we made her with your DNA, also she is are captive, she is now injected with you, when she was born, she will be all, you'll look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to them now with her body, also that now we chip to chip, mind take over, as she ages, you'll be here Linking's. using mind also body control, you will live within her.

The recombinant embryo is grown in-vitro during the flight to TRIUMPH, which takes 10 years (ship-time- 7 years Earth time, it is a dependence thing.) They have freshly started a program called MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Program.

The Association is trying to bridge the cultural gap with the autochthonous population, which has been difficult to communicate also negotiate with. At that time, it reaches near pre-teen size, since the locals are now proven, in their place at teenage.

4

The unpaid human worker then becomes a CONTROLLER. Using PSIONIC INTERCONNECTION technology, the human controller can Linking's controlling the mind-body take over body out in the wilds of TRIUMPH. The controller receives all sensory input, also gives all motor control to the body.

The controller lives through the mind-body takeover, also is completely unaware of her own body while INTERCONNECTION-ed.

Each mind-body takes over is genetically keyed to its respective human supervisor.

When it is 'born' (or more properly decanted) as a post-adolescent, it looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an IV'AN, all look like fairies also can live comfortably on TRIUMPH, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it has enough human neurophysiology to be used- as a- mind-body take over or surrogate figure.

By communicating with the locals through these mind-body takeovers, which are less alien to them, the PDA has had some success teaching them English also basic skills. So-o she was going to be one of these administrators' men. That is right, they tell her. Her teen body is the same, in vitro, also now, at the lab for several months, we have been considering you as her replacement.

It is significant since only one in a hundred volunteers produce a practical composite. Each workable embryo stalls for an investment of over 14 million dollars, you at 14 is now more, look at you know you indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable as one of them. The next mission leaves in 4 weeks, so he will have to go through a crash training course, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable wise it is still better than wasting a good mind-body takeover, now that you there- you are ready for us.

So-o, They are offering Mariella the same contract they gave tween. Since he is genetically identical, he can step into his sister's shoes, also become a controller, even if for its body, that you are in now, that looks as they.

One of the Consortium agents leans close to her. She says that as a mind-body takes over she will have legs, with the new body that she is in, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable she would have had at home planet Earth is she would have past mind also thought awareness to Life-like, life. Long powerful legs, also he can run again.

The agent's grin is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wolf. The pay is great, also it is a chance to be part of a great adventure. Mariella tells them he went for that line about it is not a job, it is an adventure once already, also it cost her the use of her legs.

Also- ten years is too long a stint tossing up for, to get her when the bots on Earth were doing their wiping out of life, that was not being transported, out. The army taught her a couple of things. She tells them to take a walk.

‘It was very relaxing to be away from civilization, also it bothered me. I ought to not have found the loneliness so welcoming.’ PUSH IN ON MARIELLA, thinking about that. Also- you see in its eyes, she is going to go for it.

SPACE, PRIMARY CENTAURI SYSTEM, 2103 AD. The I.S.V. PROMETHEUS fly's rearward through the void, blasting out the fire of the gods indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a cosmic blowtorch.

Its mixture fusion- antimatter engines hurl out glowing plasma a million times brighter than a welding arc, with exhaust plume twenty miles long which stretches out ahead of it, slowing it as it nears Primary Centauri.

Primary Centauri is the nearest star system to Earth, 4.5 lightyears away. A lightyear is the distance light travels in a year, also since light travels 186, 000 miles a second, it is a long way.

~*~

It is a big, (that is what she said!!!) half a mile long. Most of that is engine also fuel, nonetheless, the fuel tanks are almost unfilled. INTERPLANETARY VEHICLE PROMETHEUS is finishing a month-long slowing down from its highest rate of over 9, 10th the speed of light, still pulling 5 gees‘... you pull over that you are dead. I am pointing it out because it is necessary to appreciate the kind of energy it takes to get there in any sensible amount of time. You ought to go fast. As fast as the complete laws of physical science license. Also, you ought to use more get-up-and-go

to reach that speed (also then slow back down) than all human evolution is presently using in a year. So-o the bottommost line is, the bottom line. Currency, A lot of loose change.

To get an idea of how far it is, imagine the Earth is a grain of sand in my driveway in Orlando. On that scale, the sun is cantaloupe 50 feet away. Also, Primary Centauri is in New York. About a million dollars a pound, to get something from TRIUMPH back to Earth. The item of the game is not to go there also mine Tektites and Moldavite.

The least mass for the most buck; you want to find things that do not exist in our solar system at all or are incredibly rare, also then you want to refine also process those raw materials so that what you send back is the finished product. So, What you want to do is build up an industrial infrastructure on TRIUMPH, you want to tame it. You want to civilize it. Also, you need workers to do that. Only you cannot use humans, because: A. They cost too much to bring.

B. They die in 35 seconds without a breathing mask.

6

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise wait, you have an indigenous population there.

So, colonization, in the classical sense, will not work. They are primitive, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they have brains also coronas, also maybe they can be taught to do the things we need to be done. We can teach them, also give them the cool knowledge to improve their lives, so they can be healthy also shrewd, also can all have a TV, also in return, they will be so grateful they will not only work in our workshops, they will even build them for us. Wonderful, About 900 billion miles (about 1448409600000 km) away (a mere stone's throw by interplanetary sailboards, a couple of light-months) is the third star, Proximal Centauri, a runty little inflamed-dwarf.

These are the basic philosophies of interplanetary imperialism, 2200 A.D. In the middle, close together, are Primary Centauri A- Also- B, two buttery main arrangement stars very much indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable our star.

Ahead of Prometheus, we can see the trinary system of Primary Centauri, three stars orbiting each other.

Staying on TRIUMPH (as you will soon) you can see two disks of light on the horizon at sunset, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise never the third, since Proximal is too far away also just looks indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable a star.

With certain drugs, individuals can be caused to hibernate indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bears also other mammals, dozing away the years at low temperature, also with minimal mental motion. Inside Prometheus, everybody is asleep except for a five-woman flight crew who look very haggard. The rest, a hundred or subsequent passengers, are all in medically induced hibernation.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable two twins in the womb they are communing at a deep level of preconscious intimacy, with the results that the mind-body takes over 's brain has been imprinted with the patterns of Mariella's cerebral cortex.

The biological equivalent of initializing the hard drive in a computer. He is under the INTERCONNECTION because he is spending the voyage INTERCONNECTION-ed to its mind-body take over the body which is nearby in its container, Its head is fitted into a helmet- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable device, a- PSIONIC INTERCONNECTION- INTERFACE which senses also transmits its mental energy, as well as filling its brain with the return signal. It is usually called, simply, the INTERCONNECTION.

Mariella's MIND-BODY TAKE OVER BODY floats in its plastic womb, curled in a fetal position. The mind-body takes over is bigger than anthropological. The dimmer color is almost solid on the back, down the backs of the legs.

The Links would stalk about 4 to 5 feet tall if it uncurled. Its skin is light all colors Pinks and others soft pastel colors- glittery fairies- like as if light passing thought in spots, two or more shades of Light Pink in a based pattern indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a manufactured, of fairies or butterflies, (though the skin is smooth, not scaly.)

A rainbow indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable carnival glass Pink, like a womb, is contrasted with a deep ultramarine which borders on red and deep maroons.

The mind-body takes over in their womb- and indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable situation are at their metabolic rate also grow quickly.

Their muscles are constantly electro stimulated so that they develop customarily. The body is, outlandishly, almost human in the body in most ways.

The waist is narrow, also elongated, the ears ought to be very wide, giving a pare shaped upper back. The neck is elongated (twofold if an average human, or a

little longer than some Vogue models) also, we will see, can turn 180 degrees, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an owl. The body overall is slender, proportionally, than the average human, suggestive of a Masa or Watusi. The musculature is sharply defined, given no sense of emaciation despite the thin proportions.

The coroneae are joyful, with exceptionally long fingers, also one opposed thumb. The fingers curve smoothly, bending without joints. It sounds off-putting, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is quite attractive.

The faces are exquisite, with cheekbones high as any Greek God or Goddesses also large wise ever moving Iris's eyes, more holy or feminine sized to ours.

When open, they dominate the face, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to those of a cat, or a lemur. The mouth is also large, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise human, with a faint indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bifurcation of the upper lip, also a coloration permanent deep purple lipstick.

The teeth are white and sparkling, with pronounced upper canines, These people are carnivores or at least omnivores, and feminine nesting in home life. And live off the land,

A network of the complex pattern of iridescent dots also lines a soft webbing, on almost see luminescent thought wings- and glowing in low light, perfectly balanced illuminations, runs over the body in key places, almost following the lines of the circulatory system and nervous.

Did I mention smaller than us...?

-And-

They have an exceptionally long tail, that seems to link to all minds and the lay of the land- like webbing of wisdom.

Long also slightly prehensile, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the tail of a panther than a primate, with feathery wings. These are bioluminescent chromophores, also they glow in the dark indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fireflies.

The alien can communicate with these, without conscious control, also actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth, they usually are shifting also changing color to write down mood also emotion.

7

ON THE FLIGHT DECK the haggard pilots start the shutdown of the fusion, antimatter engines.

The body has no hair whatsoever, yet only on their head, though there is what looks comparable to any young teen girl, the tale just above the curving butt cheeks inventing in the back at the end, with never endings like hairs that link to other things, a waist that is the same to ours and sexualities.

Comparably wise an exterior part of the nervous system- looking like moving spilled hairs-

The other worlds drift against the stars also full of life, looking closely some with rings, and all assorted colors, to other bright moons- yet far away to get there.

Some nearing the surprisingly oddly all around this planet, yet moving slowly in orbit- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable TRIUMPH. These worlds have names by the locals, yet we have re-named them after grate men of own known world.

The ship creaks and groans as it begins to cool down some. OUTSIDE, the arc-light ceases abruptly. The entire drive module glows cherry pink with radiant heat, likewise- the exhaust jets are almost white.

They look indistinguishable, comparable crotonamide crap, hungover badly from the hibernation drugs. Within- the spaceship, in total weightlessness, the passengers begin to emerge from their hibernacula.

Mariella sits up groggily and looks around.

Her hair luminescent at night long, the body nude and she feel unshaven in places, also she was in prepubescence before, the body has now grown older.

Mariella pulls herself out of its 2 feet with a 7-foot capsule, with all-glass fronts, maneuvering as well as the other passengers in zero-G, even with its inert legs.

An announcement is telling her what to do- and how to do, likewise, where to go, for a shower automatic down by robotics and waxing also by robotic hands- and- and clothing- also that they will soon be entering orbit around her new home of TRIUMPH.

Moving corona over corona, Mariella floats over to the tank containing it is her new life's body that she will linger in, The mind-body takes over the body. He is amazed to see the growth in the three years which have elapsed on the ship.

The mind-body takes over stretches, indistinguishable, and comparable, extending to its full height, dwarfing Mariella.

Nevertheless, as it turns in aquiver- the amniotic fluid, of soft clear purple; Mariella sees the face- long lashes- eyes tightly closed, hands moving about- of her mind-body takeover, and its flawless angelic and attractiveness that is ever-so-lovely.

O'er, it looks indistinguishable, close to her.

Despite the alien proportions, the features are luminescent of hers.

A computer program tells her she has time to get some breakfast and makes it back to 'see herself be born.'

Walking to the door of the ship, others from the land of the new planet- met her- from past trips, where a portable home and lab are sitting about five hundred feet away, were all that was the former world well be held for the time being.

Seeing the new BIRTH, technicians in yellow hazmat suit suits also breathing equipment enter a bright vertical test-tube looking glass chamber through an airlock.

Mariella, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, attired, follows them in.

They seal the door locks with a thud.

One of them tells her that the air is a match for TRIUMPH's, a poisonous brew of ammonia, methane, CO₂, oxygen, and nitrogen. Even a little hydrogen cyanide.

In the center of the chamber is the tank housing Mariella's mind-body takeover. Mariella is nervous also unsure what to do, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, wise they tell her it is always best for the controller to be present at birth. It looks exactly indistinguishable, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin to a small baby who is born from glass also elastic womb, and like translucent in the flesh.

Using an elastic collar, indistinguishable, close, near, and comparable a synthetic sphincter, to retain the amniotic fluid in zero gravity, they ease the body out of the tank into the birthing room, you can see the baby bellybutton tided off for the other parts, of its artificial and ersatz womb, kicking and wiggling through the skin is the pumping of blood.

The technicians asked Mariella to help hold her 5-year-old looking body-like the wings open for the first time. The mind-body takes over kicks feebly, also everyone is grappling with the slimy newborn body.

Akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably, an overwhelmed father, she looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, she is about to faint like a new mother to her on a child.

The pure naked truth of life, struggling into existence, affects her far more than he would have thought.

She is now at that very moment, at that very time, taking her first breath. Mariella struggles to help give birth to herself in a way. They suction its mouth, and it coughs, and cries.

Its face contorting at the terror also the pain of the outer world. Mariella looks on in wonder as the mind-body takes over and starts to wail, clenching its fists,

It opens its eyes also looks right at her; she stares into its eyes, It grabs Mariella's arm also she winces in pain at the strength of the little thing she is.

Taking shuddering breaths of the poisonous air. Mariella pulls its arm free from her own. Where its own eyes for the first time. Its terror passes. It stares lovingly at her,

TECH's say- 'Congratulations it's a girl like you!'

'I wanted to say DA-H!'

'It's a child, that is now you.'

Mariella glances down along the mind-body take over his body, its expression grows even more amazed.

Just like a young girl all that is the same down there too, odd, that live on other plants have the same sexual parts, why we are here also, to keep its life going with them.

ISV PROMETHEUS goes into a low orbit around TRIUMPH. We get our first good look at the new world. It is magnificent. Another Earth with white clouds whorls over a pink also lavender surface.

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the continents are all wrong, also the proportion of Dasso to the ocean is much greater.

Then all of what we ever used to. The pink is a little different too; with a green-blue tinge to it, suggesting the dis-indistinguishable, and comparable air, makes mist, yet with an Earthly plant.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise you can just tell, even from orbit, it is a planet that has a life. It has a look.

The most amazing thing about TRIUMPH is that it does not orbit its sun directly, homogeneous, interchangeable, and comparable wise is in orbit around an enhaloes planet, a gas giant twice the size of Jupiter, that is no longer, which in turn orbits the yellow sun of the sun is a demand, yet that belongs to the androids now.

Primary Centauri B. Its monster planet has been named POLYPHEMUS, for the great cyclops of Greek myth.

It is since, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Jupiter

with its Great Pink Spot, Polyphemids has a vast cyclonic storm indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a great dark pupil in its vast disk.

The eye of an angry god looking down on TRIUMPH. TRIUMPH, despite being as big as Earth, is technically a moon of the giant planet. Polyphemids have fourteen other moons, some closer in, some farther out, also with life, clawing on it, and ways to get there, link us to them, like monorail trains floating in the air. Depending on what is where in its orbit, TRIUMPH can have two or even three moons in its sky at once. TRIUMPH also the other moons cast large black shadow dots on the parent planet, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable beauty marks.

DESCENT- tiny relative to Prometheus, one of the trans-atmospheric shuttles separates also drops down toward the planet. The LOCKHEED-SAAB TAV-36 'VALKYRIE' CLBUTT SHUTTLE is a heavy lifter, a work PEGASUS several times larger also many times more powerful than today's space shuttle. Below he can see mist-shrouded mountains, growing as they descend. The pilot tells them they are over the so-called 'Alarm' of Australis, the great southern continent, which juts up into the Equatorial Sea.

As the shuttle plunges through high-altitude cloud formations, Mariella presses her face against the tiny viewport, eager for a look at the new world. Mariella

can see volcanic indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparability's also mesas towering above a lower cloud blanket, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the islands.

Streamers also whorls of shredded cloud swirl around the mesa tops. Then the pilot tells them that they may get a glimpse of the MONTES MALONES, the famous 'hovering foothills with waterfalls, and tube liking thing liking to the ground that is clear.' ,Which paleologists say are the rarest phenomena in known space. Also, called the Praying HIGHLANDS, they are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable floating thunderstorms among the clouds, very dramatically.

Literally- totally, completely, holly- freaking floating, Hilly wedges of mainstay rocks, some over 14 miles across, hovering thousands of feet above the ground, with water tubes that you can ride linking them, aqueduct's linking them.

Here is how it works: Polyphemids (the massive planet around which TRIUMPH revolves) have a mother of the magnetosphere, an unsurprisingly occurring magnetic field a million times more powerful than Earth's.

As TRIUMPH rotates also revolves through its field, its molten iron core generates its field, with 'cells or vortices which are small regions of intensely powerful magnetic force at the shallows.'

(They have dove-like wings.)

Added to its unique phenomenon is another, TRIUMPH is blessed with a naturally occurring substance a million times more precious than gold. Its joke name of 'Tekttites and Moldavite' has stuck, over the years. Tekttites And Moldavite is a rare-earth mineral, formed volcanically, which is a room-temperature superconductor.

The room temperature superconductor has been the 'snarky' of modern materials science, a substance which transmits electricity with zero resistance, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at Nahhaal temperatures, rather than the liquid- helium-cooled superconductors of human science. Tekttites And Moldavite do not exist in our solar system or Libyan Desert Glass. It is unique to TRIUMPH.

Also, it is the reason to go there, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow bridge yet you can get there. Another interesting property of superconducting materials is that they will levitate in a powerful magnetic field.

Its magnetic levitation- everything that is its world, or maglev, the effect has been used to lift trains also run them without wheels since the late 2010s.

On TRIUMPH the effect causes huge outcroppings of Tekttites and Moldavite to rip loose from the surface also float in the magnetic vortices.

These floating slaloms circulate slowly in the magnetic currents, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable icebergs at sea yet more green, scraping against each other also the towering mesa- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable mountains of the region.

The TRIUMPH'n's call them the LINK Rocks, also the entire area is sacred to them. Therefore, they are called the Praying Mountains. This could be a plynlem, since the humans have come to mine these mountains also get rich.

Later it would be designated A+ 0, or simply Zero.

An amateur astronomer in Orlando was the first person on Earth to realize that something unusual was happening. Moments earlier, she had noticed a blur flourishing in the vicinity of the Military formation, near the moon's equator, is the new way to the far-off lands. she assumed it was a dust cloud thrown up by a meteor strike.

8

They float indistinguishable, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable clouds made of rock, amongst the fixed mountains also swirling cloud structures. Where they are in clear sunlight, they cast hard shadows on the lasso below. Mariella stares in awe

as they pass over a few of the floating mountains, less than ten miles away on its side of the ship.

They are overgrown with foliage at the top, also a straggly beard of vines hangs down beneath them indistinguishable, the roots of an air-fern.

The sides are sheer cliffs. Waterfalls, originating on the mesa-indistinguishable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tops, stream down the sides also dissolve into spray at the bottom's indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable upside-down geysers.

The local peaks also mess project above the level of the craggy underside of the few floating mountains Mariella can see, so it is obvious that collisions are inevitable.

Twinkling indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tiny flecks of ash on the wind are what look indistinguishable, close, like- birds, manta indistinguishable, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related and, much of a muchness, flying creatures of many sizes. Mariella does not get too close a look at these.

Stashing indistinguishable, comparable, close, near, and identical, a wall behind some of the smaller ones is MONS PROMETHEUS, the largest of the floating mountains.

Known colloquially as- THE BIG ROCK ALSO- MOUNTAIN with up spraying water- and flowering plant life, it alone is worth billions in revenue to the consortium. Cloaked in mystery, its flanks also top are wreathed in streamers of clouds,

Nevertheless, the shuttle plunges into the inky murk. She sees it for only a few seconds before a thunderhead blocks the view,

9

Now the shuttle is passing lower also lower over the links rainforest. Just as the plants on Earth are green with chlorophyll, the plants of TRIUMPH, based on different biochemistry, are mostly purple. The tones range from purple, Pink, through violet to magenta.

Mariella catches glimpses of the rainforest through the clouds as they skim over the endless purple carpet. Other than the color the trees look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable trees.

They have trunks, also branches leaves, though some of the shapes are strange, also the proportions are wrong. There are waterfalls feeding links rivers, also Mariella sees more flocks of bird's indistinguishable things.

They pass a few small patches of open grass also.

The magenta grass ripples in the wind close, near, indistinguishable, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to wheat.

Mariella sees some moving shapes, large herd-beasts running. Then clouds again. Mariella, coming from its gray concrete urban sprawl, is amazed by the sheer scale of its lush, virgin world.

Finally, he starts to see the corona of man. They fly over what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a small refinery. It is the DEUTERIUM PLANT, an automated facility for extracting the heavy isotope of hydrogen from the local water supply.

The deuterium is used to fuel the fusion engines of the starships for their homeward flight, as well as to run the base generators and the shuttles.

(Thinking back)

The shuttle makes its turn on the final approach in what looks like a death dive.

We get our first look at the human colony, called UNDERWORLD'S GATE.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a giant

cookie cutter took a chunk out of the rainforest, a disk of naked ground two miles across where the trees were razed also the earth scraped bare.

Nearby, connected by a broad gravel road, is a gaping wound in the earth, a strip mine where metal ores for construction are extracted. ECO- mask off he would be unconscious after the first few breaths, with irreversible lung damage in less than a minute.

At the center of the cleared circle of IVAN is a cluster of squat concrete also steel structures.

Surrounding the central complex are two high fences of thick chain INTERCONNECTION, one within the other, with concertina wire at the top.

The whole thing is electrified. At the corners of the complex are concrete towers, their tops bristling with searchlights, scanning gear, also automated SENTRY GUNS.

The reason for the no-man's also between the fences the dark wall of the forest is clear, it is lethal ground.

10

The shuttle lassos also Mariella dons its full-face ECO-mask rebreather pack. There is also a popping sensation in its ears as the pressure equalizes the outside, also then the doors open.

Mariella struggles with her wheelchair on the steep loading ramp of the shuttle. When he gets to the ground, he moves with the others toward the nearest building.

Her mask fogs with its exertion, also he feels a tickle of fear knowing how deadly the atmosphere is. If he took her Mariella sees the new mind-body takeovers being unloaded. They are brought down the ramp on gurneys, insentient, getting their first lungful of real TRIUMPH'n's air.

They are taken to a holding compound outside the Science Component- also massive earthmovers, mining equipment, also power shovel two stories high. Around her is the roar of equipment as huge tractor indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable machines thunder past. There is loading equipment, she sees construction workers in heavy environment suits. A tractor, its wheels as big as a house, rumbles past, dwarfing the new arrivals.

Beyond it, two vehicles take off, armored also heavily armed, they are IKASAWWK BH14 GYNOSPHINX gunships.

Nearby Mariella sees several COMMON SOLDIERS of CFOESE, the RDA security force, a private army operated by Grouping. The common soldier wears full helmets, rebreathers, also body armor, also carry heavy INVOLUNTARY WEAPONS.

They look constantly outward, toward the boundary. They are a hardened bunch of women also men, who live by the philosophy that sharp eyes, fast coronae also a warm gun are the keys to survival on TRIUMPH, the most badass bush in antiquity.

There is a sense that the place is under siege. The dark line of the forest is suddenly more ominous. Above the functional concrete bunker of the nearest building, the crescent shape of Polyphemus looms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a malevolent eye, seeming to cover half the sky.

Another sentry gun thunders briefly as Mariella goes into the complex.

Mariella's expression says it all.

My God, what have I gotten myself into?

INSIDE THE BASE they hold the arrival briefing.

She says the local ecosystem is a minefield of toxic plants, lethal stinging insects, also large venomous carnivores, station supervisor RIDGE TOP VILLAGE welcomes them to TRIUMPH and IVAN, then quickly lays down the rules of survival here.

All and sundry must be always armed when outside the structure, also firearms training and drilling are scheduled for all base personnel. All forays outside

the perimeter must be accompanied by one or more CFOESE common soldier also must be authorized by its office, also scheduled with the head of the sanctuary.

She tells them about the stiff penalties for any violation of the base security rules, as well as for the use of illegal drugs, fighting, misuse of firearms also so on.

There is a frontier town mentality, as well as an overwhelming sense of us against them. We humans, also them being anything that draws breath on TRIUMPH.

It is not all grim here, he says. As of today, you will never get another cold or flu. We do not get them here.

TRIUMPH has somehow reacted to the introduction of our viruses by creating a counter virus for each which wipes them out. Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth, the Consortium has the patents on these counter viruses, also when the FDA approves them, everyone around the universe will be buying them.

That is the sort of thing we are looking for here. So please stay alert to the commercial possibilities of your research. Ridge village is a smart, forceful, charismatic man who is utterly focused on the success of the operation on

TRIUMPH- Its calm, almost breezy style belies an absolute ruthlessness in the pursuit of its goals. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable her historical prototypes, the governors of Spanish also English colonies in the Americas,

its mission is to overcome all obstacles to gain a foothold in the new world, also, more importantly, show a return on the staggering speculation.

Ridge village introduces LYNN PARRISH, the BIOETHICS OFFICER. She works for the Environmental Protection Department of the ECA. Called an EC.

On the dying home planet, the environmental parties have grown strong as the Earth has grown weak, so these officers are sent to make sure that the new worlds are not ravaged by the economic imperative of the megacorporation's.

Lynn looks the very image of a studious, concerned 'Blue' activist, with its beard also Birkenstocks.

Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth, the EC is all bent, extremely on the take also making a large profit by turning in token reports of infractions while ignoring the greater desecrations.

Mariella notices a woman using a stereo camera to record the meeting. She pans the crowd of fresh faces indistinguishable, interchangeable, kindred, to a documentary filmmaker.

Ridgeville introduces her as MARCIA DE LOS SANTOS, the FREE MEDIA OFFICER.

It is her job to send home the inspiring footage used for corporate advertising and recruiting, though technically she is keeping a full impartial record of the operation at IVAN.

Among the arriving passengers are twenty new common soldiers.

They double-time down the ramp, carrying their huge packs also kit bags. They smartly salute the hardened CFOESE common soldier, who eye the new meat with smirking disdain.

Mariella sees more of the common soldier; also realizes they are forming a loosely deployed guard around the new arrivals.

There is a sudden ROAR as the sentry gun in the nearest tower opens fire.

There is an ungodly shriek in the air. A stream of bright tracers arcs out to the no-man's lasso of the bare earth beyond the fences, Mariella cranes to see, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise her view is blocked by the shuttle.

Ridge village heavily edits her down Interconnection's to Earth, claiming the 'expense' of data transmission, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is ironfisted censorship.

Ridge village introduces COLONEL MILES DUARTHA, the CFOESE commissure. Duartha is a humorless man, thick necked also barrel-chested, with one side of its face twisted by the scars from an encounter with some FDF'n predator.

She hates TRIUMPH, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise love the fight. Duartha characterizes the antipathy between staffs also the world they have come to conquer.

Duartha adjourns the briefing, to the chagrin of DR. BRANTLEY SIESSAH, the base- XENOANTHROPOLOGY'S also the head of the Mind-body take over Programing.

She scrambles to the front of the room as the meeting breaks up, calling for the new controllers to report to her in SCIMOD.

Duartha sneers as she pushes past Siessah, also we see that there is no love lost between these two.

Duartha stops next to Mariella and says she reads Mariella was a marine. Mariella confirms it, also Duartha wants to know if she was wounded in combat.

12

Fell out a window, drunk, at a base party, Mariella tells her.

Duartha is a little put off by Mariella's attitude, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise tells her that when he is done wasting 'it's' time with Siessah also her meat puppets,

She can use her in CFOESE. The ops center also the armory are understaffed. ON ITS WAY TO SCIMOD Mariella gets a look at the base from the inside.

There are six primary modules, laid out along a central trunk called the UTILIDOR, through which all foot traffic, also all utility lines conduits run.

It has three levels, the subterranean one being narrower also primarily an access-way for maintenance.

The flight control, dispatch, also CFOESE commands- and more CONMOD's is the control module, containing communications, administration? The quarters, also contain the laundry, food services, gym, also recreation areas.

Mariella finds her room and throws its bag on the bunk.

In the upper Utilidor, Mariella bumps into NAHHA HARMON, a spindly guy who is one of the new controllers Mariella recognizes from the ship. Nahha pushes Mariella down the corridor as they look for SCIMOD.

They pass GENMOD (power), STORMOD (storage,) as well as the vehicle maintenance module, simply called the GARAGE.

They reach SCIMOD which is a multistory building, full of labs and arcane equipment. None of it means anything to Mariella. They catch up with the tour, just as Siessah is showing the new controllers into the INTERCONNECTION ROOM.

Here we see the veteran controllers in a long row of what look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable high-tech dental chairs.

They have the INTERCONNECTION gear over their heads, also are tied into the distant bodies of their respective mind-body takeovers. They are sleeping or in a trance state.

It resembles RAPID EYE MOVEMENT sleep, with the eyeballs tracking rapidly under the lids, also the fingers twitching occasionally. Technicians monitor the functions of the controllers, also track the positions of the mind-body takeovers on screens.

Siessah shows them how the same implanted chip which allows the Rapid eye movement INTERCONNECTION to the mind-body takeovers also gives them a minute-by-minute position on them out in the bush, or around the base of the mine, wherever they might be. Siessah tells the new arrivals that they will each be assigned to a veteran controller, who will supervise their first- INTERCONNECTION-up with their mind-body takeovers.

One of the working controllers breaks her INTERCONNECTION contact, also lifts the hood, climbing wearily out of her chair.

It is the end of a long workday, also her body is stiff with abandonment?

Siessah calls Mariella forward and introduces DR. JAN PELLERLY, the controller he is assigned to.

Jan Pellerly is a gruff xenobotanist in her mid-forties, dumpy, also gravel-voiced from too much smoking.

She scowls at Mariella, telling her to meet her in her lab at 0606 tomorrow. She ignores Mariella's proffered corona, wheeling around to yell at the monitor techs that she needs a goddamn cigarette.

The next morning Mariella is waiting in the biology lab from five to eight.

One wall of the lab is observation windows, beyond which are large terrariums holding some TRIUMPH'n flora also fauna. Mariella peers into a chamber filled with ferns- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable violet plants, unable to see if there is anything else in there.

She moves to the next chamber, which is an aquarium filled with murky water. The window is huge, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he can see nothing in the gloom.

She turns as Jan Pellerly comes into the lab. With shocking suddenness, a dark shape, much bigger than her, materializes out of the murk also slams against the glass.

BOOM!

Mariella whips around to see the head of a hideous armored fish, its huge jaws snapping shut, clacking razor-sharp teeth against the glass.

JAN- I see you have met our Dinicthys. She loves to do that.

Jan goes to the glass and looks at the massive fish in the eye. It swims away.

JAN- Just a baby, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at the rate she is growing, we are going to have to put her back in the lake by- next week.

OVER THE NEXT FEW DAY'S- it will become noticeably clear that Jan is to be Mariella's reluctant mentor.

13

Reluctant, since they are so understaffed that she was counting on the trained skills of her brother.

Mariella is not qualified for anything on the base except kitchen staff. She needs a real assistant, a scientist.

HOLY- Hell, even an undergraduate. She is pissed off at the situation also sees it as just another way the company is screwing the biologists also the Mind-body take over Program.

They do not want to know what is going on here, they just want to strip the goddamn place. They will have it all plowed under before they even know what is out in that bush, also they will miss the real treasure.

The Earth is doomed because- its biodiversity has been killed. It may take centuries to die, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is only a matter of time.

Out there are wonders they cannot even imagine, also all they do is cut funds, also send her useless assistants.

Mariella interrupts her rant also tells her that he did not come lightyears out into space, did not get shot up with drugs, inoculated against God-knows-what, also frozen for three years, just to come here also- be her punching bag. If she has a polyneme with her, tell the base supervisor, otherwise take a pill, lady.

Jan looks at her for a long moment. Finally- she cracks a wicked grin.

JAN- So-o, a live one, huh?

Having lodged her complaint also put Mariella on notice, she takes her to the Interconnection room for its first assembly.

(MARIELLA'S FIRST- INTERCONNECTION ASSEMBLY.)

Mariella goes under the INTERCONNECTION for the first time, also takes control of its mind-body take over the body.

We cut to the MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER in the training compound, an enclosure behind SCIMOD in which the fledgling mind-body takeovers are taught to function also survive.

It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a kids' playground, with parallel bars, hanging rings, balls to throw, monkey bars, also various other structures that will be used in its physical patterning. She is watched by techs behind a glass-covered wall.

Mariella, mind-body take over opens its eyes, also looks around with amazing awareness. Her interconnections, the strange hues of the alien vision flooding its brain- she moves awkwardly, sitting up.

She takes a deep breath and smells the air. Its nostrils flare with the flood of new alien smells.

She looks at its corona, staring at it, working the fingers.

She looks down also stares at its body, then touches it with one corona. Feels like the skin, smooth and warm.

A tech tells her over the PA to check its motor control.

Try to touch its fingertips together. She does, missing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related,

much of a muchness, and comparable a drunk at a sobriety checkpoint. She tries again, face screwed up in concentration. Its fingertips touch clumsily, shaking slightly.

Can she see, the voice asks? She nods- with a yes. Breathing, okay?

'Yes...' speech check.

Try to talk more.

Mariella, Mind-body takes over 's throat works, also an inarticulate croak emerges. She tries again, also it sounds indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, to a baby trying to imitate speech. The tech tells her to try crawling.

She then rolls to its belly.

Pushing up with its arms, he gets its knees under her. He is unsteady- as a newborn antelope, its arms also body shaking as muscles clench nerves fire spasmodically.

She crawls clumsily, indistinguishable, close, near, interchangeable, and comparable to a baby, to a transparent plastic chair nearby.

Mariella, Mind-body takes over gets one corona on the chair also tries to pull herself up.

After a lot of effort, she is almost stashing, hunched over indistinguishable, and likeness to an ancient woman. Finally, she is standing on shaky legs within to body. She lets go of the chair. Swaying, she stands free.

She grins, bearing slightly pointy teeth.

Then falls right on her butt hard.

Hearing laughter from the technicians, she looks up.

Statuesque female mind-body takes over walk-up, standing over her.

The first female she has seen- that was like her now yet before her.

She is magnificent,

With powerful panther thighs, a flat muscular stomach also small close, near, almost identical, wise firm athlete's breast showing with pointed nipples, and tight lover female genitalia.

She is wearing insubstantial, summary, feathery, and airy; also, in human years would be about 7 just like me a little older than I that would be around 5. Her face looks familiar, Mariella manages to croak out its first sentence.

MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Who, are, you-you?

FEMALE MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Who do you think...? Dumb crap?

How quickly they forget.

The voice is very recognizable. It is Jan. Now that we know, we see her face in the alien features. She grins at her, also cocks one hip. JAN, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER Aren't I- a babe?

Jan, mind-body take over helps her to its feet, also supports its weight while he tries to walk, just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, and comparable to a mom holding a baby's coronae. She faces her, holding its coronae, also steps backward. Mariella, the toddler, takes its first steps.

She slowly let us go of its fingers, letting her balance herself. She takes another step forward, yet it is wobbly.

Mariella stares down in amazement at its feet. Its face holds a child indistinguishable, close, near, to a wonder. MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER I am walking.

JAN, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER ,You sure are, kid.

Mariella's eyes fill with tears. Jan sees one running down the pink skin of its cheek.

JAN, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER-Yup, looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable everything is working simply fine.

-And-

Mariella being interviewed by Marcia De Los Santos, the Free media officer.

Mariella is explaining how its training is going. She is walking fine now and smoothly, nonetheless, now she has started climbing, also running, and many types of exercises.

Its coordination is already equal to a human five-year-old-yet in a way that is what she is in this body.

She asks her a question then she has asked all of them, what it is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to wake up in another body-and see and feel as if the soul has changed for one to other only.

Mariella tries to tell her, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she cannot. Just that it is a wonder-and ever-so-odd.

Also, in its case, a great gift nonetheless lingers in a new body with the same mind.

She says the air smells much like and comparable to apple cinnamon.

MARIELLA, under the INTERCONNECTION. In CU we see its eyes tracking, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he is dreaming.

MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER runs to catch a ball thrown by one of the other trainee mind-body takeovers, Nahha Harmon.

We barely recognize skinny Nahha, since its mind-body takes over the body, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable all of them, is powerfully muscled.

Mariella, Mind-body takes overtaking a drink of some green liquid, which spills down its chin and neck. By its expression, it tasted great.

Nahha, mind-body take over showing off to the techs, using the window indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a mirror to shoot bodybuilder poses.

Mariella doing a running cartwheel, jumping up, also catching the monkey bars, also pulling herself rapidly across the corona-over corona.

Jan, mind-body take over, taking a picture of her with an Instamatic camera as he eats an unfamiliar FDF'n fruit, getting the juice all over herself.

Mariella, Mind-body takes over drawing also firing a large pistol, blowing big holes in paper targets.

Mariella, Mind-body takes overlies down to sleep for the night on a futon in the training compound. Some of the other mind-body takeovers are already asleep nearby. There we can see bioluminescent spot patterns glowing in the dark.

Mariella, Mind-body take over stares up at the alien sky, seeing large Polyphemus a flying moth rise against the stars.

Its multi-color green and blue cat indistinguishable, close, near, and comparable eyes are wide with the wonder of its new world.

She hears the chatter also shrieks from the forest, that black wall out beyond the compound. The sentry guns fire also there is a piercing scream, short-lived. Soon he will be out there.

Its eyes close, as sleep takes her.

The human Mariella opens its eyes in the INTERCONNECTION room a moment later.

She climbs stiffly from its chair, pushing herself across to its wheelchair. She sits rubbing its temples with fatigue.

Even in the lesser gravity of TRIUMPH, its human body feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a deadweight after its exhilarating hours in the other body.

Jan, looking tired also rumped, climb out of her seat nearby. She looks down at her doughy body.

JAN-At midnight-I always turn back into a pumpkin. Come on, let me buy you a drink.

IN RIDGEVILLE'S OFFICE, Duartha is complaining that he does not have enough men to escort all the scientific sorties, cover the mine, the base also the new construction.

Ridgeville tells her he will cut the escorts on the scientific teams back to one man per sortie.

Duartha nods, Likewise, say that the number of major predator attacks on the perimeter has steadily increased, also, there have been five major breaches of the outer fence this year. One of its men was killed by a SLINGER last Tuesday, also, two are on the medical report because of, HELLFIRE WASPS.

One of its gunships was attacked by a MANTICORE like a flying lion near the deuterium plant, also almost crashed.

We have lost seven people already this year, twice the number for the same time last year, also it is already over its ammo budget. It is getting worse, not better.

Ridgeville says he will order more men also weapons on the next starship, also cut back on the scientific package.

Then orders Duartha to clear-cut a wider safety zone around the new construction.

They just must make it to then; the clearcutting operation, out at the sides of the safety zone -big tractors also bulldozers and excavators are ripping into the tree line, toppling the huge trees.

Now we see why the equipment is so big, the trees are prodigious, rapid eye momentaneous, gigantic, and giant.

The dozers have plasma cutters that rip into the trees, slashing through their gargantuan bases in a spray of fierce light also burning wood-shrapnel.

The larger trees are blasted with high explosives, raining kindling down for hundreds of yards. The tractor drivers are safe in armored cages, also Gynosphinx gunships prowl over the tree line, looking for large predators that might be approaching.

DEEP INSIDE THE RAINFOREST, as the tractors relentlessly approach. It feels as if somebody- or something is watching.

14

A tight pair of eyes is following- like eyes in the sky.

The cat near, almost identical, and comparable eyes of one of the humanoid FDF'NS, with a GLIMPSE of figures moving through the foliage, their skin-markings acting as almost perfect camouflage.

We can barely see them at all. Just an impression of Joyful, agile, and graceful forms. Then nothing.

A MASSIVE METAL FOOT crashes down into the frame.

The angle is WIDER to see that it belongs to Miles Duartha wearing a POWER SUIT.

It is a Life-like impression walking machine, bipedal, about 4 feet tall. Though massive, it is gyroscopically balanced, also quite agile, able to duplicate most human motion. It is heavily armored, also armed with a huge rotary cannon, a UGA 911, built into one forearm.

Duartha uses a psionic INTERCONNECTION to control the machine.

Under its bubble canopy, the Colonel scans the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity of the forest. He glances up as two Gynosphinxs fly overhead.

One opens fire, one something, its tracers streaming down into the trees. The Gynosphinx pilot tells Duartha that a pack of VIPER WOLVES is heading its way.

Duartha scans among the trees, seeing vague infrared shapes moving on its screens.

Ahead, in the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity, she sees black shapes squirting from shadow to shadow indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blobs of living ink.

They seem to dart across the ground, then move through the trees from limb to limb, sometimes seeming dog comparable, other times more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to Thunderbirdflies.

Duartha opens fire with the UGA 911.

It- sows a horizontal swath through the forest, splintering everything in its path into wood chips.

Trees and plant life crash, also flapping things called STING-BATS, around are glowing fireflies of all shades and hues, multi-colored ladybugs, rise into the sky with shrill calls- and Fenix's inflame making them.

We discern a dreadful, grim, grisly, ghastly, harrowing, horrifying, horrific, horrendous, frightful, fearful, awful, terrible, shocking, appalling, hideous, gruesome, heinous, vile, and nightmarish yelping whine, which goes on also on, getting more distant,

Satisfied, Duartha crashes forward through the bush, scanning.

A one-foot puncturing stinging like a bat with translucent spots smacks into its canopy, it is tail- stinger screeching on the glass.

She crushes it, with one hydraulic corona, unconsciously, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to someone swatting a small ladybug, then again in this world that what it would be like.

A shrieking HIPPOCAMPUS hurtles at her from above the trees. It is a small one, less than a three-foot wingspan. Shaped indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a manta creature, it swoops through the trees on translucent wing membranes. We get a glimpse of glassy fangs unfolding from its mouth indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable catclaws, then the cannon blows it into chunks. Duartha's canopy is showered with Pink FDF'n blood.

She passes a large plant form called PHALANXIA which fires nettle-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable projectiles at her. They ricochet off the armor, leaving drops of glistening venom. The FDF'n fauna also share the philosophy of us versus them. It is one nasty place.

Behind Duartha two common soldiers in power-suits follow her into the bush ahead of the wall indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable blades of the bulldozers.

Duartha blasts something else. We see that he enjoys his work. It takes personal interest that things are done right. IN THE UTILIDOR Lynn Parrish is walking with Carter Ridgeville.

Parrish is complaining that Duartha also CFOESE is going too far. Now they want to burn large sections of the forest, to clear it of predators. How can he be expected not to report that?! Ridgeville tells her that he ought to just do what he always does, shut up also take the money.

(IN THE COMMISSARY-)

Mariella is eating with some of the other controllers. You can see definite territories staked out by the various groups. The CFOESE common soldier stays on their side of the room, also does not mingle with the civilians much.

Also- scientists have their area. Within that, the controllers have a little corner reserved for them, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise whether they are the elite, or the pariahs, is not clear. A little of both.

The controllers are a scruffy, smelly lot. They spend as many hours a day as they are allowed to (up to 16) under the INTERCONNECTION, also as their stint goes on, they get less also less interested in personal hygiene.

They are indistinguishable, with unkempt hair, also some beards or lovely hair, nice skin, and big appetites.

Over yonder, a crazy guy is bussing the table named HEGNER.

Moving slowly also vacant-eyed, she is doped up on something prescribed by the base psych tech. Jan tells them that Hegner used to be head of Xenobiology until its mind-body take over got killed, ripped apart by a SLIGHT. The slinth is a large predator, fast as a cheetah, that spears its prey with its head, which is indistinguishable, close, near, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a venomous glance. The prey wobbles off also collapses, alive also conscious indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise unable to move because of the neurotoxin.

The slinth eats it alive. Hegner felt herself dying, also he has not been right since. Added to the trauma is the loss, the loss of its other life, the one lived in its mind-body takes over the body.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable many of the controllers, he came to see it as its real-life, with its human life taking on the feeling of a boring dream.

Jan tells Mariella that they are going out to her worksite tomorrow, also she will be meeting a local, named N'DEH, who is her guide.

Siessah says N'deh is one of the few who will still work with them, after what those CFOESE jarheads did.

There was an incident, a year ago, between the nearby aboriginal people and some CFOESE common soldier who was trying to clear them out of the construction site for the new deuterium plant. The site was sacred ground to the TSUMONGWI.

Mariella says he thought they were called the IV'AN. Siessah says that is right, the whole TRIUMPH'n race is called the IV'AN.

They are all IV'AN, all around the planet, because they all have the same root language. It translates as 'The Seeing People.'

Their word for TRIUMPH is NA'AT, 'The People's Mother- their deity.'

Curiously, it is the same word they have for the forest. So, to them, the forest is the world. Which is right, since there are no deserts or veldts, also all the aldolases are uniformly covered with forest, right up to the permanent polar ice.

The local clan is called the Tsumongwi, 'The Pink Flute Clan.'

Anyway, Siessah also its mind-body take over group were having some success with the local clan, teaching them some English, also how to use some of our power tools.

Their technology is Neolithic, bows also spears, clay pots, animal skins, that sort of thing. No written language.

They were helping to build a school in the forest, near their home villages, when CFOESE pissed in the soup.

The clan patriarch has protested the 'Earth People.' Us, clearing the trees at one of their sacred sites.

They have never indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable us cutting down the trees anywhere, also it was all I could do to get Ridgeville to stop its safety zone at the size it is, he was just heading for the horizon with it.

They mourn the spirit of a tree when it dies. It is- quite touching.

Anyway, when the tractors showed up at the sacred site, which was just a clearing in the woods, the IV'AN attacked; then they attacked the tractors, not the men. Set the tires on fire. Shot a few poison darts at the engines.

Duartha ordered its men to fire into the forest, knowing the IV'AN were there.

Show them who's boss. Five IV'AN were killed. Since- then we have not seen hide nor hair of them around here.

They will meet with us in the forest, sometimes, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise never here. Also- things are very strained.

N'deh has been invaluable, also there are a couple of others. It is almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable they drew straws to see who would get the crap- detail of dealing with us hairy Earth People. Also- N'deh drew short.

AT DUSK, OUT IN THE COMPOUND, the tractors are returning from the construction site. A common soldier keeps a loose guard cordon between the gravel road through the rainforest and the compound fence. A couple of Power-suits stride among them, dwarfing the common soldier also the civilian construction workers in their masks- hardhats.

The twin suns- of Primary Centauri A also- B are fat red disks just above the tree line. Sting bats, unicorns- glowing rays also other flyers are silhouetted against the orange sky.

Mariella, Mind-body takes over, inside the compound, walks to the fence also watches the machines returning. Behind her, they are loading up an AVIC utility vehicle about the size of a Huey helicopter. It is a JF-17 THUNDER HOVERING AIRCRAFT.

The JF-17's is armed only with a door gun, also are the prime- movers of air operations here. They are used by the scientists to reach their Rapid eye movement worksites, also by the construction also mining teams to move personnel also supply. IVAN operates ten of this work PEGASUS, also they are under civilian command.

Mariella looks up. Silhouetted against the twin suns, sitting on top of a cargo container nearby, is a real honest-to-God alien, an IV'AN.

She looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the mind-body takeovers, of course, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable wise the difference is in the details.

She is wearing a beaded loincloth of animal skin, also has a leather tube slung across its back.

She is squatting, still as a statue, holding what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a long spear, which stands upright against the sky.

-Then-

Mariella sees that it is a bundle of long fishing arrows, with the unstrung bow held alongside them.

The IV'AN turns its head all the way around, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an owl's, also the eyes bore Mariella.

MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER N'deh?

The IV'AN rises, then step off the container, dropping to the ground indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to liquid, also silently.

~*~

She regards Mariella with curiosity, coming quite close to her. He walks around her, looking her up also down; slowly she sniffs her.

Jan walks up and introduces them formally,

using N'deh's complete name: N'deh Her- mequeftewa. N'deh makes a curious gesture with its corona, touching one finger to its forehead also flicking it joyfully toward Mariella. Mariella nods.

N'deh is older than Mariella. In human terms, we would guess her to be in 'its' late thirties. Next, to her, we realize that Mariella's mind-body takes over the body are incredibly young, a man in 'its' teens. 14.

Jan quietly speaks to N'deh in the IV'AN language, surprising Mariella. It is the first time she has heard it spoken. Nevertheless, the sound of it is overly complex. It is a musical and lilting,

Jan seems quite fluent. By subtitles, we understand that she is asking her to help her load the sampling equipment into the JF-17.

N'deh closes its eyes for a half-second, which we will come to see means the same as our nod of agreement.

They walk toward the Aerospatiale together.

Mariella hears shots and turns. There is a commotion out on the lethal ground. Near the tractors, a Nahhas animal has burst from the treelined also is charging for the fence.

In the dust raised by the giant machines, also with the number of men around, it is difficult for the common soldier to get a shot. To make matters worse, the sentry guns have been deactivated in that sector while they bring in the heavy equipment.

Twice the size of an elephant, the beast is called an ENFIELD-TITANOTHERIID, also it is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a six-legged rhinoceros. It has a massive, low-slung head with blunt transverse projections of solid bone which give it the look of an Enfield shark.

It is an herbivore, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the rhino, elephant also hippopotamus, it can be aggressive also deadly.

The common soldier fires their rifles at the monstrous silhouette charging through the dust clouds, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the rounds do not affect the armored head also ought to ear.

A paratrooper in a power-suit strides between the tractors, trying to get a shot with the UGA 911. Suddenly the beast appears out of the dust at a full thundering charge, also the power-suit is knocked down before the cannon can swing to bear. The bull Enfield smashes the canopy with one foot as it charges right over the power-suit, pulling the paratrooper inside.

Mariella sees Enfield close to the final distance to the compound fence. It is coming straight toward her.

Everyone is firing at once, trying to bring down the twenty-ton creature. The ground is shaking in time with its galloping gait.

It hits the outer fence, smashing right through it. A power-suit runs forward, striking a firing position, also opens with its cannon. The GAU 72 rips into the Enfield, blowing divots out of it ought to er also head.

The creature bellows in pain, also rage keeps on coming.

Mariella pulls its pistol and adds its firing to the general thunder of guns.

The Enfield hits the inner fence. In a blaze of high- voltage arcing, it bulldozes through the chain Interconnections. It stumbles, tripping on the wreckage of the fence, then rises also thunder forward again, filling Mariella's vision.

BOOM!!!

The cannon roars again also the titanotheriid topples forward, plowing into the ground. It flips also skids, coming to rest in a cloud of dust ten feet from Mariella. There is a beat.

-Then-

Over the creature's body flows a dog- and comparable shape, big wolf. It hits the ground in a ripple of muscle also bounds straight toward Mariella. It is SLINTH.

Its venom-injecting spear- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and the comparable head is cocked back on its powerful neck, ready to strike. Mariella raises the pistol, which CLICKS. Empty.

Her face is like death; then suddenly beside her is N'deh, drawing also aiming its bow in one swift move. The two-foot-long arrow flies straight into the slinth's throat. It coils over itself in agony indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable a Dove- N'deh knocks another arrow also let us fly. The slinth shudders also lie twitching.

N'deh walks forward, stepping on the needle indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable head while he Rapid eye movements its arrows.

MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER N'deh. Thank you.

N'DEH Luck. (He holds up an arrow) Fishing points are not good for lethal slinth.

The high-tech common soldier stands around with their blasters, looking at the stone-age arrow that killed the beast.

N'deh looks at the dead slinth, then at the body of the titanothera which cleared a path for it into the inner compound. Its expression is enigmatic.

N'deh takes the blood of the slinth on its finger and draws a line under one eye, then under the other.

Honoring the slinth, also its purpose for existence. He starts dragging the carcass to JF-17.

Nearby somebody screams. Several hideous insects, a foot across, are leaping from the body of the titanothera also trying to fasten their hook-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable legs into some of the common soldier. With the host dying, the parasitic WOLF-TICKS are looking for a new ride. A frantic burst of firing breaks out, as the soldiers jump around, trying to kill the fast-moving parasites.

A very nasty place to be.

THAT NIGHT- with all the stars- twinkling, Mariella, Mind-body take over stands at the compound fence, looking out at the forest primeval. Tomorrow he is going out there for the first time, also he is scared.

There is light moving out there, single flitting ones, also larger patterns indicating big creatures.

Some of the trees grow very faintly or have phosphorescent patterns in their foliage.

Mariella sees eyes, low to the ground, moving just behind the tree line. Several pairs. Also- then an unearthly wailing cry. Viper wolves. Crap, what am I doing here?

IN THE JF-17, the next day, they thundered over the treetops with a roar of turbofans. Below them, the purple rainforest unrolls. The human pilot also the paratrooper escort sit in a sealed front cabin, while Mariella, Mind-body take over, Jan, Mind-body take over also N'deh ride in the back compartment with the side doors open.

They landed in Jan's direction, in a grassy meadow.

They get out as the pilot shuts down the turbines.

Their- escort, CORPORAL LILLIE WAINFLEET, steps out wearing mask, helmet, armor also rebreather. He is carrying an almighty big automatic rifle. Mariella is wearing shorts and a T-shirt. Jan insists that he go barefoot, so her baby- Pinkie ties

will toughen up with thick callouses indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hers.

Mariella stares at the wall of trees surrounding them. Up close, the trees are Nahhas, as big as sequoias at the base, also even taller because the gravity on TRIUMPH is less than Earth.

Lesser trees, the size of mature oaks, are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable underbrush in between the colossi.

Lillie is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a bird dog on point, hyperalert, scanning the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murkiness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity-beyond the meadow. A flock of sting-bats crosses far above them. She tracks them with the rifle, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they ignore the strangers.

JAN- 'Lillie, stay with the ship.'

LILLIE- 'I'm supposed to escort you.'

JAN- Lillie, you are supposed to escort me to my party. The ship is part of my party. Also- we need it to get back, so if you do not want to walk thirty clicks through the bush, LILLIE I will stay with the ship.

Jan hates the common soldier clamping through the woods with her. They disrupt the animals, also smash the plants, also make too much noise.

Also- they tend to attract larger predators, to whom they are injured or defective animals.

They grab the cases of equipment and N'deh leads them into the trees. Mariella stares all around indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a tourist in hell, rubbernecking also fascinated, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise scared crap-less.

Mariella expects every dappled shadow to hide a razor-fanged predator, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise their entry into the forest is uneventful.

Mariella is jumpy also on guard. Swatting at insects.

Soon she gathered quite a cloud of buzzing attackers.

Jan uses a machete to hack open the bole of a low, cycad- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable plant. She takes the viscous sap from the inside and starts briskly rubbing it all over her exposed skin. She recommends that he do the same unless he wants his bones picked clean by every insect in the forest. She quickly complies.

The insects move off, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable magic. Jan explains that the IV'AN use plant extracts for all sorts of things, to relieve pain, purify water, reduce fever, limit, or improve fertility, promote wound healing, counteract stings also poisons, attract useful insects, kill external also internal parasites, prevent sunburn, also repel, or attract larger animals. As a xenobotanist, her work has been vastly accelerated with their guidance as they help her see the greater interconnection between things in the forest.

Mariella gazes around her in wonder as they move deeper into the primeval gloom. The bark of the giant trees is alien, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable big hexagonal fish scales.

Moss covers the lower parts of the trunks, also lines another vine- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable structures lace around

them, also hang between them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fallen power lines.

The roots of the greater trees are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable mangroves, also they form clusters of pillars, each thick as a Nahhaal tree trunk, which joins far above their heads into a single massive trunk.

These root-trunks wind around each other, forming a braided cylinder, which then rises a hundred feet above the ground before it forms branches.

They move on. Jan starts giving her survival pointers.

How to avoid the things that bite also sting suck.

Phalanxia, the deadly projectile plant, shows up bright as a neon sign in the ultraviolet-sensitive mind-body take over vision.

No plynlem, give it a wide berth. She shows her the nests of Hellfire Wasps, the wasps do not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the sap they have rubbed on, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise do not push your luck by coming near the nest.

She sees a DOVE TREE also brings her as close as she can.

It is a hydra- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable, ambulatory plant twice Mariella's height.

It moves into place, then freezes so that it resembles a gnarled, dead tree. When prey moves within range, it comes suddenly alive also strikes with one of six fanged heads. The animal is digested in a pitcher- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bole, also the half-stripped bones ejected to lure more prey.

Mariella sees the bones lying around the base of the tree.

Some of them are from animals at least as large as a man, or a mind-body takeover. Jan, The xenobotanist, is overly excited to share the Dove tree with her.

They move on. Mariella has never been in a forest before since they are mostly gone on Earth. SHE- is scared,

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise dealing. It is interesting.

16

She continues to give Mariella pointers, touch its, do not touch that. They startle a small creature that crashes away into the underbrush.

Further up the trail, N'deh signals them to stop.

Jan motions, also they crouch down, watching through the leaves as something moves through the woods parallel to them. It is a small six-legged herbivore called a hexapede, about the size of a taper.

N'deh points at something else, also Jan whispers to Mariella.

JAN- Look. A slinger. It is stalking the hexapede.

Mariella does not see anything at first, then he spots it. A camouflaged shape moving through the sun-dappled shadows.

The predator moving into the glade is

splashed by hard slashes of sunlight, which combine with its camo pattern making it hard to see. The SLINGER is smaller than a slinth, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise just as deadly.

It moves silently, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable liquid, through the ferns. It pauses, rearing up, also indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the slinth its muscular neck cocks back into a striking position,

JAN- Watch it.

The slinger's neck snaps forward, also it is long, pointed head detaches, flying through the woods as a self-guiding venomous glider, a smart dart. The hexapede senses the dart also bolts, bounding in evasive zigzags.

The dart tracks it unerringly through the trees and buries itself in its flank. The hexapede staggers. It stands, its muscles spasming, then falls over. The dart starts emitting a series of high-pitched squeals, which allow the body to home in on it blindly. The neck bends down, also is rejoined to the dart.

Mariella catches a glimpse of hair- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tendrils lacing together, neural interface. Then the slinger starts to rip the hexapede apart.

Jan explains that the slinth, with its striking head, is the evolutionary precursor of the slinger. The slinger's primary brain is in the dart, so if the body also the dart is ever permanently separated, they both die. The dart cannot feed itself.

The body also dart is the mother of a child, a dart is an immature form. When it grows too big to fly,

It will mate, then drop off also metamorphose into a small complete slinger with its offspring already in place, forming the new dart. Each new generation is the brain of the previous one.

Backward sounding, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it works.

Mariella watches the feeding slinger in awe. He has never seen anything indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable its, so raw were also primal.

JAN- 'Welcome to the food chain ladies.'

N'deh leads them past the feeding slinger, which is preoccupied with its kill. Mariella's heart is pounding.

She is still scared crap-less, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise its stuff is amazing. He feels more alive than she has ever felt.

~*~

They enter a clearing with a partially built structure in the middle. It is made of heavy timber, cut from the local wood. It is the school meeting center that Jan also Dr. Siessah were trying to build. They had gotten the IV'AN to build it is much, working alongside them, before they had retreated from human contact. Now the vines also moss are reclaiming it. Sting-bats roost under the eaves.

N'deh makes a high-pitched clicking sound between tongue also teeth, also several of the Sting-bats flutter down toward her. He holds out some small fruits he has picked on the trail, also the Sting-bats perch on its arm ought to er's, munching.

Mariella knows that the stinging tail spines are lethal. SHE- gives the Sting-bats a wide berth as she helps Jan with her sampling equipment.

She changes power cells, collects data disks, also does other housekeeping chores, Jan goes to work on some equipment that has been left here for rapid eye movement connection.

Jan chops through a thick liana with her machete and drinks from the dangling vine. Mariella tastes it.

Water, clear also slightly sweet. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable drinking from the teat of the rainforest.

Back at the JF-17, Lillie is idly tracking a Hippocampus circling far above her with the scope of its rifle.

The bored pilot is betting her ten dollars he cannot hit it. she is about to fire when he catches sight of some movement out of the corner of 'its' eye. SHE- motions to the pilot to keep still, also they watch as three DIRE PEGASUS emerge from the trees to munch grass in the meadow.

DIRE PEGASUS (look like sea-PEGASUS) are herbivores, vaguely PEGASUS- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable in design, with exceptionally long necks also tiny heads.

They have long, moth- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable antennae with feathery tips, which are constantly moving, touching the tips of other dire PEGASUS' antennae as they move near each other. They stand about three feet at the ought to ers, or about half as big again as the largest Clydesdale- they have bold striped patterns on their bodies, also glinting, chitinous armor over ought to er's also along the back of the neck head.

17

Lillie moves forward in a predatory crouch and rests its rifle across the fuselage of the

JF-17. The dire-PEGASUS munch is unconcerned.

Fifty dollars say I nail all three, Lillie says. You are on, says the pilot.

POOM! The lead PEGASUS, the male, drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it was poleaxed. The other two spook, rearing, POOM! One of the females drops, kicking its legs in the air as it writhes on the ground. The

third one bolts. Lillie tracks with it, POOM! It crashes forward, its necks bending back double as it goes end over end.

The second dire-PEGASUS struggles to regain its footing. It pathetically tries to drag itself toward the sheltering forest with a severed spine, its back legs useless.

BOOM!

A blast of dirt, next to it. It hobbles further, honking indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a Canadian goose, its signal for distress. Lillie fires again, rushing the shot. Misses.

LILLIE- 'Crap!' She giggles.

It does not count if it makes it to the tree line.

LILLIE- Start reaching for your handbag.

She flips the weapon to full auto.

BOOM!!!

The crippled dire-PEGASUS disappears in a cloud of dust as gouts of earth explode all around it. Tree- trunks are blasted, foliage also underbrush ripped into confetti.

When the dust clears, the dire-PEGASUS is an inert carcass.

ON LILLIE, turning toward us is a grinning, seeing the trees all dead and the animals.

A pink corona slams into the frame, grabbing its rifle. Jan rips the gun out of its corona also flings it cartwheeling over the JF-17, then twists its arm behind its back.

She viciously torques it to the breaking point, doubling her over. She forces her to its knees, jamming its facemask into the mud.

JAN- Little ones ought not to play with guns.

Lillie is cursing a pink streak.

Jan kneels on its back and grabs its breathing mask.

She said- 'I am going to give you some fresh air.'

Lillie squawks also pleading with her not to. She disgustedly gets off her. She is already walking away, toward the felled creatures, as Lillie gets up.

Mariella sees her going for its sidearm. Lillie, has it aimed at Jan's back, also is about to pull the trigger when Mariella hits her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a freight train?

SHE- slams the paratrooper against the cowl of the ship, twists the pistol out of its corona in one lightning move, also then picks her up bodily. Mariella is

amazed at how easy it is to hurl the human twenty feet away, even weighed down by its full battle dress.

Lillie crashes in a heap, breaking her arm, also lies there moaning. Mariella picks her up with one corona and leans close to its mask.

MARIELLA- Lillie, look at me.

Lillie! Are you looking? You do that again, I will bite your throat out.

Mariella bares its pointy teeth in a vicious snarl. Lillie's eyes go wide with primal fear.

MARIELLA Understand?

Lillie nods, also, Mariella shoves her into the

JF-17. Jan is staring at her new assistant. He is a fighter.

There's hope for her yet.

Meanwhile, N'deh has gone to the bodies of the dire-PEGASUS.

A foal, only a few days old, has been hiding in the ferns nearby. It also honks for its mother to get up.

It licks her face and honks again, pitifully.

N'deh pulls something from the tube across its back.

It is a piece of gut-twine with something on the end, a carved wooden cylinder. He starts to whirl it round also round, above its head also as it builds speed, it emits a powerful ululating wail, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a siren. It works indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the 'bullroarer' of the Australian aborigines, though the pitch is different also N'deh is somehow able to modulate it into a more complex sound.

The sound of the bullroarer echoes off through the trees for miles.

~*~

THE JF-17 lifting, banking away above the tree line. Its turbofan roar fades. Then there is only the sound of the forest. We see shapes among the trees, figures which blend with the foliage. The band patterns on their bodies make them hard to see in the dappled light.

Close on one of the dead dire-PEGASUS. A pink corona enters the frame, stroking its face. The foal is lifted, still honking feebly, also carried away on strong pink ought to ears.

BACK AT IVAN Brantley Siessah is on the carpet in Ridgeville's office.

The incident with the paratrooper- Wainfleet could not have come at a worse time. The Mind-body takeover Program is on shaky enough ground, without its sort of thing.

Now Duartha is out for blood, also Carter Ridgeville is considering restricting the number of scientific sorties he approves of, also confining the mind-body takeovers to the base. Siessah is barely able to get her to loosen up, rapid eye overextending linking.

Of all the things they have learned about TRIUMPH from the IV'AN, also how much money there is to be made from the drugs also biochemical compounds yet undiscovered in the forest. His Rapid eye overextends to her the money the Consortium has made from the counter-virus.

Think how great it would be if they could get them IV'AN back to the table, trusting us again. Also- how is the common soldier running around blasting everything in sight that caused the rift with them in the first place.

Ridgeville also- Duartha does not understand a primitive culture which lives close to the soil, close to the daily cycle of birth also death. They do not understand, also they do not want to. Duartha thinks the natives are lazy and stupid. You give them a gun so they can hunt better, also they give it back. How smart is that?

Siessah tried to explain that the IV'AN considers it unfair and obscene to hunt with a gun, a dishonor to the spirit of the animal and its purpose for existence. They believe that everything has a purpose, also sometimes the animal's purpose is to

feed the IV'AN, also sometimes the IV'AN's purpose is to feed the animal, also determining which is what makes them both strong, fast also perfect.

They do not want to change.

Ridgeville says that if that is true, the IV'AN will never help them build reality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truths also strip-mine their planet.

They are useless to us. Also, Siessah knows he has said too much. She is trapped in 'its' argument. He tries to stall, saying he can get the IV'AN to cooperate.

NEXT, WE SEE Siessah raking (human) Jan also Mariella over the Tekttites and maldonites in her lab. Mariella says he had to do something, that jarhead was going to blow Jan's mind-body take over away. Siessah holds its head in its coronae. Would any court, anywhere, let her get away with equating a human life to that of a genetic construct, a living antireality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth created in a lab?

Siessah says he knows what it feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable, She is like Kristen years back spent enough hours in the bush, in mind-body take over form. It is intoxicating, it is the greatest experience imaginable,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they have to rapid eye movement link- ember what they are here for.

Also- what is that? Jan yells, challenging her. To get the IV'AN to trust us? So- can we use them? So- can we harness them to the yoke. So- we can make them slaves, also teach them to participate in the rape of their home planet? You are an-anthropologist, Brantley!

How did it turn into it? You are no better than Ridgeville, also it is a goon squad. Are you getting a nice fat payoff indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Parrish?

Siessah is furious.

He tells them both he does not want them around the base for a while until things cool down. He wants them to go out to SITE 26. They can spend a couple of weeks in the boonies collecting, up in the Praying Mountains, while he tries to get things patched up.

She warns Jan that she is 'going native' also dragging her assistant into it as well. Also- that way can lie madness.

Look what happened to Hegner.

A JF-17 roars high above the rainforest, climbing into the mountains.

Mariella also Jan is sitting up front with the pilot, KIMBERLY CHACON. N'deh rides in the open back compartment with a single paratrooper, CORPORAL BILL ONOZUKI, also the unconscious mind-body takeovers of- Mariella also its boss.

MARIELLA- So-o, what happened to Hegner?

Jan tells her that Hegner's mind-body take over was not just killed by a slinth. He let the slinth take her. Suicide. He was dying of a broken heart, also being in the mind-body take over the body without its loved one was just too painful.

She managed to fall in love with an IV'AN man, some say they were married, also she was killed.

She was one of the five killed by the CFOESE common soldier in the incident which caused the big rift between the two species. Also, - Hegner went crazy.

Her name was Li Na.

There are many dangers of TRIUMPH, Jan says, also one of the subtlest is that you may come to love it too much.

MARIELLA- 'AS IF- Not so far.' a rapid eye movement research station AKA: 'Linking.' It consists of a 'cabin.' Then a single airlift module, about the size of a train car, which is perched on the flank of a mountain; near Montes Molones.

Here the trees are gnarly also much shorter, their roots gripping the rocks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable arthritic coronae. In the

clear space around the Cabin are packing cases also instrument packages left by previous research groups.

The station is uninhabited.

A few of the nearer flying mountains are visible a few miles off, among the clouds.

A JF-17 lands ever-so, near the Cabin. Jan also the pilot gets out, wearing masks also rebreathers. They get Mariella's chair out of the back then help her out of the ship and into it. Their paratrooper escort does nothing to help unload, merely scans the area, its gun held at the ready.

N'deh stays in the back compartment of the aircraft with the unconscious mind-body takeovers of Mariella also Jan.

They enter the Cabin, which is dark also musty. Jan starts the Genny also turns on the light's equipment.

There are bunk beds, a cramped clutter of scientific gear, also two INTERCONNECTION chairs.

Kimberly jokes about being alone in the mountains for a couple of weeks with two men in such cramped quarters.

Mariella says the only threat he poses is body odor, indicating its useless lower body.

Once Jan has checked out the INTERCONNECTION transmitters, also Mariella goes straight to the chairs. Outside, at the ship, their mind-body takeovers interconnection also sits up.

They get out of the JF-17 also stand, breathing the cold mountain air.

Streamers of cloud wreath the nearby mesa-tops, also partially obscure the floating mountains nearby.

They go out the next day to place instrument packages among the floating mountains. Mariella also Jan goes under the INTERCONNECTION in the Cabin at Site 26, while N'deh also the mind-body takeovers ride out in the JF-17. The reason a mobile controller station was set up in the first place is that the magnetic flux around Montes Molones interferes with the INTERCONNECTION signal from

IVAN. They need to be closer.

19

The JF-17 is a tiny moving among the vast floating islands of rock. Unicorns- glowing rays also other smaller flying species circle next to the cliffs in the sunlit shafting between the clouds. Waterfalls plunge thousands of feet down the sheer walls, then dissolve into nothingness below the bottoms of the mountains.

Kimberly pilots the JF-17 under one of the floating mountains, also we see the upside-down forest of vines that are like FiberOptics- dangling from the underside.

They pass between falling streams of glowing water. It is a dream indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable also surreal.

Mariella, sitting in the wind in the open door of the JF-17 sees a unicorn-glowing ray cruising near them. It studies them for a moment, beating its huge wing membranes to keep up.

It lets out a piercing shriek (hence the name) also then banks away, diving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a jet fighter. Paratrooper Onozuki, wearing a mask also armor, sits in the other doorway, leaning on the sling of the door-gun.

Jan names the floating mountains as they pass. Mons Veritatis, Truth Mountain. Mons Tiburon. Mons

Damocles. Icarus. Daedalus. Also- finally, the biggest of the superconductor mountains, Mons Prometheus, The Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. A hundred billion dollars- worth of pure Tektites and Moldavite.

They land on the mesa-top of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain.

Paratrooper Onozuki deploys rapidly, scanning.

It is a rifle ready. The others leave and go to work.

The mountaintop is shrouded in a blowing cloud bank.

Occasional shafts of sunlight play across it, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is mostly gray mist.

Mariella carries its instrument package away from the ship.

He sets it up at the edge of a cliff, per Jan's instructions. Below, through gaps in the clouds, he can see purple forested slopes, half a mile down.

Mariella sees more Hippocampus circling below.

A couple passes nearby, giving her an eye. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable reef sharks they will size you up, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise seldom attack something their size unless it is in distress.

Mist closes around Mariella as he walks back to JF-17.

The visibility is only a few feet. Without warning, a curtain of what looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable slimy ropes emerges out of the mist.

They are hanging down from above, their source unseen, also are dragging over the ground with a faint swish.

Mariella whirls in time to see them, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is enveloped.

They are translucent tentacles, only a couple of inches in afoot.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they react instantly on contact with her, curling around its limbs also the body, also zapping the hell out of her with electric shocks.

Mariella is entangled also dragged, struggling, across the mountaintop. She shouts, also, the others run toward her. The paratrooper aims its gun up into the mist above Mariella, hoping to hit the source of the tentacles, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan stops her from firing. We do not know why yet. N'deh sprints toward her, drawing its machete.

Mariella sees the cliff edge approaching, beyond it nothing. N'deh will not reach

Mariella in time.

Mariella is swept off the edge, its feet dangling over space.

N'deh throws her the machete, also Mariella catches it with the corona. N'deh almost falls, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan grabs her, pulling her back from the edge.

They watch helplessly as Mariella is carried away. Then Jan runs indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hell toward the JF-17, yelling to Kimberly to fire it up.

Mariella, still getting zapped by electric shocks, tries to get a look at what is holding her. The cloud bank falls away, also he sees a Nahhas transparent canopy above her, glistening in the sunlight. It looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable an impossibly huge jellyfish, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a cross between a Portuguese man o' war also a blimp.

It is a clear membranous sac, or bell, filled with hydrogen, produced by an internal biochemical process. The bell is 14 feet across, also the tentacles are over 35 feet long.

The bell pulses to give some directional control,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise mostly they drift with the wind. It expels gas to descend, also expels water from trim bladders to rise.

Mariella sees a whole school of these things, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a fleet of ships, emerging from the clouds on both sides of her.

Apparently- they sweep the tops of the mountains for prey, stunning it with their electric shocks. Mariella looks up also sees that the contracting tentacles are bringing her much closer to the pulpy mouth. In JF-17, Jan also the others searched for the clouds for Mariella. They see the fleet of gas bags, also move toward them. Jan says they are AERO-COELENTERATES, genus MEDUSA.

These are X. Medusa gigans, not too common, it is in the far east. She tells Onozuki not to fire because they are full of hydrogen also will- explode indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to Hindenburg.

Mariella is hacking at the tentacles with the machete. They are tough, also rubbery, hard to cut. Its distress encourages some circling Hippocampus to attack. As they dive toward her, we see the distensible jaws unfold, revealing glassy dagger-indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable teeth several inches long.

Mariella hacks at the first one, slashing it right across the face. With a shriek, it veers off. The jaws of another snap inches from its leg, also he chops into it

with the machete. It flutters off in a descending spiral, the ought to er of one wing hacked open. Some of the others follow it down, ripping it apart.

Kimberly maneuvers the JF-17 closer.

WHAM!!!

They are slammed by something from above. The ship drops also she fights for control. Onozuki is almost pitched out. They pull her back in. A huge shadow, then they see it.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a Hippocampus, only several times larger. It is the king predator of the air, the GREAT LEONOPTERYX.

Striped, scarlet, yellow also black, with a midnight pink head, it is iridescent also beautiful. It feeds on Hippocampus, munching them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable salted peanuts, also the occasional medusa when it is hungry,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise its fight is not about hunger, it is about territory.

It sees the JF-17 as a competing predator, also it is pissed.

The great Manticore swoops away, climbing with unbelievable speed, disappearing up into the sun.

Kimberly loses sight of it. Jan tells her to take evasive action. Fast...'
Kimberly banks also dive.

Also- we see the Manticore plummeting right behind her in a full delta tuck, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hawk stooping.

They build up air speed, also Kimberly moves right and left, then right, trying to throw it off.

Mariella sees them go out of sight behind the flank of the Big Rock Calsoy Mountain, also knows she is screwed. He chops harder at the tentacles, hacking through another one in a spray of violet blood.

~*~

As she gets nearer to the pulsing sphincter of a mouth, he starts to hack at the gas bag overhead. SHE- chops through the membrane, also hydrogen whooshes out, spraying her with a mist of blood. Mariella hacks again, widening the tear.

With a thin scream, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a tea-kettle whistle, the medusa starts to descend.

The great Manticore outmaneuvers the JF-17, slamming into it in a bone-jarring crash. It flaps away with a piece of the engine cowl, also the JF-17 plunges, smoking, toward the ground.

Amid alarms and flashing lights Kimberly fights for control.

The cabin is full of smoke. The ship hits the treetops with a series of splintering crashes, also sails out over a clearing, crossed up also spinning. It plops down into a huge gray mud-spot. It has come to rest in the middle of an area of volcanic springs, where terraced pools of mud plop with steam from below, also geysers shoot up nearby.

Visualize paradise ‘The Garden of Eden’ with purple- and soft pink trees in flowering, also a few floating mountains in the background.

Everyone inside is okay, though shaken. Bloody noses, bashed knees. Onozuki jumps out into the mud, in a rage, also slogs its way to the rocky ground.

SHE- runs up a rise, screaming at the leonopteryx, which is a crimson kite banking away.

SHE- opens fire with its rifle. Jan has come out, shouting something to her, which he cannot discern over the thundercrack of his weapon.

FROM A HIGH PLACE- we can see the paratrooper as a tiny dot on the rocks below.

The air rushes downward. A huge shadow can be seen, rippling over the ground, rushing toward Onozuki, who is firing in the other direction, it turned back.

We rush right down to her, meeting our shadow, the shadow of wings 14 feet across.

WHAM!! The angle on Onozuki as he is jerked up out of frame.

Its gun also helmet plop into the mud near Jan, also terrifying shriek echoes across the landscape.

(SEVERAL MILES AWAY-)

Mariella is plummeting toward the rainforest, still wrapped in the tentacles of the deflating medusa.

The trees claw up toward her, also he enters a snapping, slashing hell of purple foliage.

SHE- is jerked to a stop, the wind knocked out of her, also its machete clatters down into the forest below her.

~*~

SHE- finds herself hanging ten feet above the ground. The tentacles go limp as they die, also he slips down, trying to hold onto them now. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of

a muchness, and comparable wise they are too slick. He slides down its greased rope, falling the last two feet to the ground, where he lands on its feet.

She jumps to its feet also scrambles away from beneath the Medusa.

Panting, he looks up at it.

It is still dead...?

...?...?

She finds its machete also stands to survey the gloomy forest around her.

-AND-

Alone in the bush, miles from nowhere.

Great...? She feels an overwhelming sense of doom and gloom.

Mariella backs away from the Medusa, then turns to look behind her.

CHOMP!

The striking head of a Dove-tree snaps its jaws shut inches from her. He jumps back as several of the other head's lunge.

CHOMP!

CHOMP!

CHOMP!

She stands there panting, just out of range of the hydra heads.

MARIELLA- Its place is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a goddamned Roadrunner cartoon.

At the downed JF-17 Kimberly has called the base.

She tells- Jan that they cannot send a ship for a couple of hours, everything is committed. Also- Duartha will not send one of its gunships to pick up civilians. Prick. Jan picks up Onozuki's rifle and tells Kimberly to get back to the ship.

Mariella is walking through the forest, moving in also out of patches of sunlight.

SHE- slaps at bugs.

SHE- finds the plant Jan used for insect repellent also cuts it open, smearing it on herself. Something is watching her from behind a curtain of leaves.

Golden- EYES- are watching from the dappled shadows. IV'AN eyes. Piercing gaze, FILLING FRAME. A soundless motion, the eyes are gone.

Mariella walks on through the forest, skittish, also hyperalert.

She keeps its machete gripped tightly. Something small rustles away through the ferns near her. He hears distant shrieks, chirps, grunts.

There is a crash also an explosion of splintered wood flying leaves. A BULL ENFIELD TITANOTHERE emerges into the clearing ahead of her in a shower of foliage.

Its baleful eyes lock onto her. Mariella is frozen. The titanotheres bellows also lower its ten-foot-wide sledgehammer of a head. It charges. The ground shakes.

Mariella, in desperation, screams at the top of its lungs, spreads its arms wide also runs straight at the thing.

It stops its charge abruptly, with an oversized bleat.

MARIELLA is amazed by the gambit that worked. SHE- then grins.

Make a face at the titanotheres. Something rises behind her out of focus, RACK FOCUS to it, revealing,

A MANTICORE- It is what stopped the

Titanotheres's charge.

The manticore is the most fearsome of FDF'n predators, also by the look of it might be the toughest carnivore in the known universe. It could eat a T-rex and have the Alien for dessert.

It is a many-colored limbed panther from the underworld, the size of a tractor-trailer, with an armored head, a venomous striking tail, also massive distensible armored jaws.

Its shiny black skin looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable polished leather, also is badland with thin strips of gold scarlet.

It has four powerful legs forming a base for a torso which angles up, centaur- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable, to a powerful ought to er girdle.

Folded against its chest are two long forearms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the striking limbs of a praying mantis.

Curving up over the back is a muscular Gynosphinx tail that ends in a scythe- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable stinger, over a foot long.

The locals call it- ‘Palulkan’... which translates as ‘Dry Mouth Bringer of Fear.’

Mariella, still unaware of the silently advancing manticore, yells- ‘boo!’ to the Titanother. It wheels around, SKOUFYCEOLeting in fear, also thunder off down the trail.

Imagine Mariella's surprise when there is an earsplitting snarl behind her also seven tons of rippling manticore launches over her, landing between her also the titanotheres.

The Enfield is shaking the ground at a full gallop, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the manticore runs it down in half a dozen powerful bounds.

It leaps to the titanotheres' ought to e'r, seizing it in the powerful front limbs, also then the muscular tail arches over, slamming the foot-long stinger through the beast's armored neck.

The neurotoxic venom is pumped in with one contraction of the muscular tail, also the titanotheres topples to the ground with a crash, shaking the forest.

Mariella gapes as the manticore rips into its prey with massive jaws lined with distending fangs 12.67 inches long.

Mariella backs slowly away, trying to be invisible.

SHE- slips behind some foliage, then runs indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hell.

MARIELLA is now chopping at a sapling he has cut down, fashioning it into a long spear.

She hacks at the end, forming a crude indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise sharp tip. Its motions are jerky and manic with fear.

She sticks the machete through its belt also carries the spear two-pronged as she moves through the forest indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it is a minefield.

THEN- through the leaves- AND FOLIAGE.

-AND-

Also- the eyes, bright in a slash of sunlight. Golden irises indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a cat, in a feral pink face. They duck away as Mariella approaches.

~*~

Mariella passes a tree, also on our side of the tree we see a figure, standing utterly still, listening to her pass.

An IV'AN WOMAN. She is young, also lithe as a cat, with a long, slender neck, muscular ought to er's, also nubile breasts, a statuesque vision. Let us speak plainly here, she is devastatingly beautiful. For a man with a tail. In human age, she would be in her late teens.

In the sun-dappled shadows, her island markings make her invisible.

Mariella passes less than a foot from her and she also never knows she is there. She watches her, frozen, only her eyes moving.

CLOSEUP ON MARIELLA'S FACE- ON OF EXCITEMENT- THEN- on the IV'AN man. She sniffs the scent Mariella has left behind her in the air. AT THE CRASH SITE the rescue ship has arrived.

Kimberly climbs aboard the hovering JF-17, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Jan also N'deh say there are going to look for Mariella.

The AVIC craft banks away. Jan looks to the west as she walks to the tree line. The twin suns are set behind a black wall of alien trees.

(DUSK IN THE RAINFOREST-)

Mariella, moving through the quickly darkening forest, has polynemes. In the deepening gloom, she sees black shapes moving with liquid Jan among the shadows behind her.

She is being stalked by a pack of viper-wolves.

Mariella catches movement out of the corner of its eye also realizes one of the things is moving up to a flanking position. She sees a glint of eyes, and Interconnection in black movement, then nothing. Darkness.

Also, behind her more glints, pairs of eyes. Then a hideous sound, more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a hyena's maniacal laugh than a dog growl.

Mariella starts to run along a game trail he has been following. She catches glimpses of the viper wolves bounding through the woods, staying with her.

Its running has made them bolder. They sense its fear, also they are closing in. SHE- sees another on its opposite flank now.

The forest has come alive with- bioluminescence as the day fades. Spots also patterns, ghosts also galaxies of pink- green light dance before its eyes, disorienting her, seeming to surround her with the glowing cat-eyes of the viper-wolves. Their psychotic laughing barks become more intense as they signal each other, getting excited.

SHE- can see the shadows of the viper-wolves moving through the undergrowth, leaving a tell-tale trail of flashes as they brush against the sensitive plants.

Finally, one makes a run at her. She senses it angling in on its legs from behind also she whirls, whopping it with the flat of the spear.

It yips also goes past her, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable wise instantly another move in. She jabs it with the business end of the spear also it yelps, retreating, baring its fangs. Mariella realizes that she is making 'its' final stand.

The viper wolves circle also Mariella gets its first good look at them. She is not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to what he sees. They are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wolves,

Hairless, with shiny skin that looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable overlapped leather armor. They are mostly black, badland with vermilion also thin lines of iridescent pink.

Earless low- slang heads, with chitinous neck shields indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a triceratops. Bright, intelligent eyes.

Also- the same distending, Dove- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable jaws as the Hippocampus, glistening with fangs that look indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable they are made of glass.

Most disturbing are the creature's paws, which are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable leathery black coroneae, almost human in shape, with a thumb for gripping. These things can be hunted in the trees as well as on the ground.

There is half a dozen of them, more in the shadows.

Mariella feels a rush of adrenaline, or whatever does the same thing in its mind-body take over the body, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he has never felt in its life. It goes through her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a lightning bolt also the fear is gone.

MARIELLA (shouting,) 'Do you want me?' 'Come on! Get some of me!'

With sharp snarls and a blur of motion they attack.

Mariella plants the spear in one, striking true, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the speed of its attack wrenches it from its coroneae.

She draws the machete also chops at another, just as a third sinks its teeth into its arm. He yells in pain and fury, slashing across with the machete. It cuts deep into the throat of the one on its arm, also it lets go.

She sprints, and runs- like- trying to escape, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable wise one of the viper-wolves grabs her by the ankle with its powerful fore- corona.

-And-

Mariella tears away, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise goes sprawling.

She looks up in time to see four viper-wolves lunging toward her. The nearest leaps at its throat.

THUNK!!!

An arrow appears in its chest. It lands on her, already a dead weight. He pushes it off in time to see a pink figure wade in among the wolves. It is the IV'AN man.

She cracks her bow down on the skull of one of the wolves.

Then grabs another also picks it up bodily, hurling it against a tree. The last one leaps at her also she drops under its weight, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise rolls somehow, coming up on top of it with a knife in her corona. The knife flashes down buried to the hilt in its heart.

The last two viper wolves, stunned by her blows, retreat yipping into the black woods.

Mariella gets up, amazed to be alive, amazed by its man, its vision. She recovers her arrow from one of the dead wolves. SHE- speaks to her, not knowing if she understands her.

Finally- she speaks, in halting English.

He knows she must be one of the Tsumongwi clan, the ones taught by Siessah's people how to speak English.

Her name is AULEIHA TE KAHA POLENOMA.

Mariella thanks her for letting the viper-wolves.

Auleiha's eyes flash with anger. It is not a thing to thank someone for, she says. It is a sad thing, also it is its fault.

She blames her for the unnecessary deaths of the wolves.

If he had known what he was doing, they would not have attacked. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is clumsy also stupid as a baby. These are unnecessary deaths.

She touches the fangs of the wolves respectfully. She murmurs to them in her language, asking them to forgive her. Also, to forgive its stupid alien man.

What ought I to have done?

SHE- wants to know. She explains how sap from a certain leaf imitates the smell of a slinger dart, you rub it on your face, also it scares them. They think you are a slinger. They will not attack you. Auleiha stands, walking away as if nothing has happened.

Mariella grabs its machete and sprints to catch up with her.

She scowls at her, also says that you alien people do not understand its forest. You ought not to come here.

You only cause polynemes.

Mariella asks why she saved her, then. Why not let her wolves have a nice meal if she loves them so much? What is the deal?

She stops, meeting its eyes for the first time.

AULEIHA- 'Because you are brave.'

She grins at the compliment.

She scowls, turning away again.

AULEIHA- 'Comparable wise you are dumb more than a child.'

'Teach me, then.' Said, MARIELLA.

She looks at her again.

MARIELLA- You do not want to leave me out here alone to harm more animals. I am a menace. I need to be taught what to do.

AULEIHA- ‘You aliens do not see as we do.’ Never see.

MARIELLA- ‘Teach me to see as you do.’

AULEIHA- ‘No one can teach what is misunderstood.’

She lets her go with her. First, she binds its wound with some plant dressing that stops the bleeding and the pain.

As they walk, he asks her questions.

The first lesson is about silence.

They walk on. The sky is black also full of stars. Two moons provide more than enough light for its large cat-eyes. Bioluminescence is everywhere.

A GHOSTBIRD flies through the trees above them.

A glowing, transparent membrane, delicate as a blown-glass figurine. Elegant also insubstantial. Its song is eerie indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise quite melodic.

Other things are wafting through the high branches, little points of light indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fireflies.

A couple of drift near her also he sees that they are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable glowing dissuasion seeds, about the size of large indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable westerlies, waving their silky cilia to move joyfully through the night air.

They cross a large bed of moss, which reacts to the pressure of their footsteps. Rings of pink/green light, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable water ripples on a pond, expands outward from each footfall.

Mariella sees movement in the trees ahead. Suddenly a glowing manta-shape banks toward them, a Hippocampus.

Mariella raises her machete, bracing for a chop. He slashes at the shape also,

It dissolves- into a swarm of MOONWRAITHS.

These insects fly in a tightly patterned swarm, imitating the shape of a Hippocampus to discourage insect-eating predators.

The moon-wraiths disperse indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a mist also reform further on.

AULEIHA- ‘You do not see like us.’

They pass through a grove of trees indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable willows.

A fountain of gossamer tendrils from each central stalk.

The long tendrils hang down indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable straight hair, also they glow faintly.

They sway hypnotically as if in a breeze, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise there is no breeze.

They reach out, gently caressing them as they pass through.

Auleiha runs her fingers through the tendrils as she walks. She murmurs to them in her language. Mariella listens to her, talking to the trees as they walk through the suddenly magical night.

Auleiha breaks into a loping run.

Mariella catches up, also soon they run silently together through the dappled moonlight. Its body is powerful, also it is effortless. He feels almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he is flying.

~*~

Looking down, he sees exploding rings of light where its feet touch down.

They approach a waterfall, a wide curtain shimmering in the moonlight.

Auleiha runs agilely over a fallen trunk, across a broad pool at the base of the waterfall.

LOOKING DOWN we see glowing, gently moving shapes covering the bottom of the pool. They are giant anemones.

Auleiha also Mariella is silhouetted sprinting over a garden of Pink, cyan also salmon-colored living starbursts, some over three feet across.

They ran on in silence.

Mariella breaths deeply, smelling a thousand things he never noticed before.

SHE- feels indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable he knows what they are, at some cellular level.

Something, deep in its brain, deep in the fabric of its alien body, is awakening. They enter a clearing filled with chest-high ferns.

She signals her to stop, then shows her a creature perched on a nearby fern.

Mariella sees a black, stick- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and

comparable a sea serpent thing perched on a front ahead of her. It is about a foot long and ugly as a toad. As he approaches it goes SNAP!

A long spine lying along its back snaps around in a circle, unfurling a bioluminescent membrane of bright orange also pink, a perfect disk a foot across, opening indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a Peacock.

The rapidly distending fan- wing imparts enough angular movement to spin the creature indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a frisbee. It glides, spinning, through the darkness. It floats across the clearing to another branch where the wing furls,

Vanishing as suddenly as it appeared. Auleiha runs forward with a sharp cry, plunging into a large patch of ferns. With an explosion of color, two dozen FAN A SEA SERPENTS snap into motion, also Mariella is suddenly surrounded by luminous floating disks, which spin away between the glowing trees.

The ugly little sea serpent becomes one of the most beautiful things she has ever seen. Actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth, its world which seemed so ugly has become one of awesome beauty.

Mariella's face fills with child indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wonder. SHE- looks at Auleiha, also sees her smiling.

Mariella notices that the chromatophores on her body have brightened and changed color. SHE- looks down. It has too. Its skin pulses with colors he has never seen before. He does not know what it means. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Auleiha does.

Several of the dalsoelion-seed things floating near her. Humans call them WILLATHEWISPS, also they are more plants than animals.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise right now they are acting with purpose. Now there are more, circling her. Some alighting on her. SHE- laughs as more of them come.

Soon Mariella is pulsing, glowing, fluttering mass of light, standing in the clearing. Auleiha is overly impressed by it. She takes it as a sign that he is accepted by the willathewisps.

The forest is giving her a blessing. Why does she not know? indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she knows not to question it. Also, she is secretly glad.

Because she is fascinated by its aliens, also now she has an excuse to take them to, THE VILLAGE.

Mariella follows Auleiha into the village of her clan. They live inside the bases of three of the Nahhas mangrove- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tall trees.

Cookfires are visible through the pillars of the roots, also people move past them as tall silhouettes.

Auleiha calls them also they come out to look at Mariella.

The PATRIARCH, also MATRIARCH, stands to wait for Auleiha to explain what she is doing. She goes into a long, uninterrupted explanation, in rapid-fire bursts of her lilting, musical language, accompanied by lots of corona gestures which fascinate- Mariella with their eloquence. Her jointless fingers are hypnotic to watch as she talks.

The Matriarch, MO'AT POHATSUA examines Mariella closely. She looks at the viper-wolf bite on its arm. She says something to the Patriarch, MATO'A TE KAHA NAHGOITEWA, also they confer briefly.

As we will come to find out, Mo'at also Mato'a are Auleiha's parents. She is what you might call a princess, destined to be the Matriarch of the clan someday.

So, they cut her some slack. Future Matriarchs are expected to have good instincts.

Mato'a invites Mariella in for dinner, also they go inside the base of the tree.

Mariella is amazed at the size of the thing inside. By the light of the cookfires, she can see up into a cylindrical gallery, which goes off into darkness.

It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a biological cathedral, held up by pillars also flying indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise tresses of living wood.

We see the people of the tribe, also how they live.

Mothers with babies, old ladies, young hunters. The Matriarch also Patriarch rule equally, though each with their area of responsibility also expertise.

The Patriarch is the hunt leader, also oversees the making of things, including pottery, clothing, also art.

The Matriarch, Mo'at, governs the tribe's interconnections to the forest, also is responsible for their verbal story, medicine also musical teaching. Her skills could be compared to those of a shaman.

Her name means 'Dream Catcher.' It is her job to request the forest for guidance, also to make requests for it. Together they determine when they must move

to allow the area, they have dwelt in to recover from their stay, also where they will go next. Their lifestyle is seminomadic, also the movements are seasonal, having to do with the migration of some prey animals, also the gathering of certain plants and fruits.

One of the hunters is TSU TE RONGLOA, whose name means 'Eats the Heart.' He is the Primary male, or dominant young male, under the

Matriarch also Patriarch. Mariella sees right away that Tsu Te is not happy about her being here.

He suspects that it has more to do with Auleiha than with a general mistrust of 'aliens.' Also, she is right.

Mariella is shocked to see Jan also N'deh here, seated also- already eating. Jan waves jauntily also grin at her, licking her fingers.

It is nice to be among her old friends again, she says.

They came to us in the forest and told us Auleiha had found you.

The whole village knew Mariella was coming, Auleiha let her mother, Mo'at, know while they were still out in the bush.

20

Does Mariella wonder how she did that? She was not packing a cellular phone. Jan just smiles.

Mariella eats dinner with them, also is made welcome. He is served some cooked fish, also some hexapede meat. It is delicious. Auleiha offers her some steamed grubs, also he does not want to be rude, especially not with her,

So-o...?

They turn out to be sweet, with a consistency a bit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable shrimp. He has a second helping, making a show of learning the IV'AN word for it.

Across the fire, she sees Jan grinning at her. She says something to N'deh, leaning close to her, also she closes its eyes in agreement.

The fires are burning low. The clan is bedding down for the night, in fiber, hammocks slung about the inside of the mighty tree. Mariella is given a place to sleep. He stares at the fire, its flickering light reflecting in its eyes. What is happening to her?

SHE- feels so, right, here.

Mariella closes her eyes, also,

SHE- opens its eyes. The inside of the Cabin at site 14 is momentarily disorienting. Human Mariella lifts the INTERCONNECTION rig also rubs its temples. He has been under for sixteen hours.

Jan wakes up in the next chair. She gets up, stretching also rubbing her numbed indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,

interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wisest.

Cracks her neck.

JAN- Gawd!! What a day. I need to get some rack. I recommend you do the same. Village life starts early at 4 A.M.

Mariella is reeling. That is, it? ‘What a day?’ He realizes he has lost all sense of what they are doing here if he ever had it.

Jan crashes down onto her bunk with a mighty groan.

She pulls herself out of its chair and into its bunk.

A beat...!

-Then-

JAN- You did well today, Mariella. Good. I am proud of you.

(THE NEXT MORNING)

Mariella awakens early to discern Jan talking to Siessah at the base.

Siessah is saying that Ridgeville is cutting off their work. After the crash, she cannot spare a ship to ferry them around every day.

Also, Duartha is pissed off about losing another man. They are being recalled.

Jan tells her to forget about the sampling up in the mountains, they are onto something. They are in the Tsumongwi village, also Mariella has made friends with the Patriarch's daughter.

It could be a breakthrough. Also, they do not need a JF-17. Siessah tells them to stay on it, she will deal with Ridgeville also CFOESE.

Jan coronae Mariella a cup of coffee.

JAN- Let us go, amigo. Time to take flesh also walk the earth.

MARIELLA, MIND BODY TAKE OVER- Interconnections awake, looking up at the inside of the cathedral tree. Shafts of sunlight stream down into the high vault above her through gaps in the 'braided' trunks. Flying Sting-bats twinkle silently high up in a shaft of light.

Jan comes by, snapping her fingers.

JAN- Another beautiful day in hell.

Mariella walks outside, looking for Auleiha. We see village life among the Tsumongwi, kids playing, people cooking, cleaning fish. Mo'at tells Mariella where to find her daughter.

Auleiha bows fishing from a rock in the pool below a large waterfall. Mariella emerges from the trees nearby and freezes, watching her.

With deep concentration, she stands still as a statue.

Then the spear- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable arrow shoot into the water, also Auleiha jumps in waist-deep to retrieve it. She holds up a good-sized fish, also grins at Mariella.

She comes up out of the water, a dripping primeval beauty.

She pulls the arrow out of the fish also coronae it the bow to Mariella, Its turn.

She- is flailing about in the pool, trying to shoot a fish. It is a lot harder than it looks. Auleiha must turn away, she is laughing so much. Finally, Mariella nails a fish about four inches long and holds it up proudly.

MARIELLA- Anybody can hit the big ones.

TSUTE is also another young hunter, TRI COOCHYESTEWA, comes out of the forest leading TWO DOMESTICATED DIRE-PEGASUS.

They control the huge animals with a leather nose-ring, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise there is no sign of bridle, reins, or saddle, only a woven grass surcingle around the animal's chest. The dire-PEGASUS drink from the edge of the pool.

Tsu Te disdainfully watches Mariella slogging out of the pool with its tiny prize.

AULEIHA- It is Tsu Te.

MARIELLA- Gesundheit. Pleased to meet Ya.

TSU - When are you going away?

MARIELLA- Direct- I indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that. It is fresh.

I hoped to stay awhile. Pick up a few hunting tips from Auleiha.

Auleiha speaks to Tsu Te in their language. In subtitles, we learn that the matriarch has instructed her to teach the alien the ways of the forest, to see if it can be done. Tsu Te sneers at that, also says something which needs no translation.

Tsu Te flips its head and catches the end of its long queue in one corona. With the other corona he gently takes one moth- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable antennae of its dire-PEGASUS, also bends it down toward her.

Next, she does an amazing thing, she touches the end of its hair to the end of the antenna, which looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a feather.

The 'hair' comes alive, rapidly interweaving with the feather- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tendrils. They knit together, forming what Mariella realizes is a neural interface, a direct plug-in to the PEGASUS's nervous system?

In one fluid motion, Tsu Te hooks its barefoot into the bottom of the surcingle also vaults up onto the back of its dire-PEGASUS. She grips the PEGASUS's flanks with its legs, also guides it with direct motor commands from the neural hookup. The animal has become an extension of its own body. Also, its coronae are free to fire a bow.

The two hunters wheel around also ride into the woods along a game trail. Mariella realizes how much he must learn.

MONTAGE OF AULEIHA TEACHING:

We see a sequence of vignettes over the next few days, of Mariella, also Auleiha together, in the village also the forest.

She is teaching her their ways.

We see her pointing out different plants, also how they can be used. Which juices or saps or leaves can be used to attract or repel certain animals? Which plant poisons are good for the arrows? What to avoid. How to walk.

How to be invisible.

AULEIHA stands behind her, correcting its position as he draws a longbow. Her coronae moved on its arm, she ought to er's, correcting its stance. Aware of her touch, Mariella finds it hard to concentrate.

NEAR A TRAIL, we see them crouching behind concealing foliage as a herd of Enfield Titanotheres walk past.

We see only the legs, huge as tree trunks. In the middle of the herd, a couple of babies walk, sheltered from predators among their parents' legs.

AULEIHA whirls a ball round also round above her head.

She hurls it also the two balls, connected by a leather thong, whistles through the air. They wrap around a sapling being used as a target. Mariella tries it.

The bolo winds up wrapped around its head, with one of the balls hitting her painfully in the nose.

Auleiha must lean against a tree she is laughing so hard.

NIGHT time, Mariella and Auleiha bow-fishing from a dugout canoe over the glowing anemones at the bottom of a pool.

A large fish swims silhouetted against the glow. ZAP! Mariella spears it.

SHOT OF AULEIHA backlit by the sun. She is talking a mile a minute, gesturing rapidly, explaining something. We do not discern the words. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable,

kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Mariella, we are just spellbound watching her.

MARIELLA nervously grips the woven surcingle on the back of an old, swaybacked dire-PEGASUS. Auleiha holds its nose ring, keeping it steady, while she instructs Mariella to bend its antenna, strong also shiny as a garden hose, down to her.

SHE- hesitantly touches the tip of its queue to the antenna.

The tendrils interweave. Mariella's eyes get big also its mouth drops open. Wow! SHE- feels the power of the massive legs under her. PEGASUS's eyes also go wide.

~*~

Auleiha strokes its muzzle, calming it. It twitches also stumbles as Mariella learns how to control it.

IN THE VILLAGE Mariella also Auleiha feeds a dire-PEGASUS foal with a gourd-shaped indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a nipple.

It is the survivor of Lillie Wainfleet's casual slaughter picked up by Auleiha's- people when N'deh signaled them with the bullroarer.

The foal gulps its meal.

SOME OF THE VILLAGE KIDS squeal with delight as Mariella shows them how to play baseball. SHE- pitches a leather ball to a kid with a corona-carved bat.

The kid makes a strong hit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when Mariella yells ‘run!’ in IV’AN, the kid bolts into the forest. Everyone cheers, thinking it is the game.

IN THE FOREST,

AULEIHA gently reaches up and bends a large flower toward her. From the pitcher- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable flower, she sips the nectar, which is sweet also thick as honey. An incredibly sensuous image.

MARIELLA, AULEIHA ALSO N'DEH has come upon the body of a slinger killed by a power suit paratrooper. The flying dart is hovering around the parent body indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a hummingbird, whimpering pitifully.

Auleiha gently captures the starving dart. N'deh chews up some food from its pouch and feeds it from its mouth to the dart's beak. It swallows hungrily, crying for more. We will see what a captive dart is used for later.

A STREAMBED is completely overgrown by a tightly woven thicket.

Mariella also Auleiha discerns a thundering sound around the bend ahead of them comes to a solid wall of stampeding sturmbeest.

Visualize indigo also orange wildebeest five feet tall, weighing ten tons also moving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a locomotive. Then multiply it by several dozen.

Mariella also Auleiha sprint down the overgrown tunnel as fast as they can, with the thundering wall of- Sturmbeest overtaking them. He leaps to an overhanging limb also scrambles up. She leaps, grabs it, also he pulls her up just as the Sturmbeest thunder underneath them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a train.

Auleiha laughs breathlessly. So, does she, giving her a mock push. Off-balance, she grabs her, also she indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that simply fine.

NIGHT HUNTING- Auleiha also Mariella ran through the forest by moonlight indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and compare two human panthers. He is more surefooted, now.

As agile as she is. Galaxies of bioluminescence surround them.

The foliage is a blur, whipping past. They move joyfully, soundlessly, also in perfect unison, two forest spirits. Above- them, mighty Polyphemus is a crescent half-filling the sky, casting its special light over the landscape.

Auleiha takes her up a fallen trunk, also soon they are running along branches that are 305 feet above the ground. Mariella cannot think. He must trust his body.

SHE- sprints with her through the trees, occasionally climbing, also leaping as she does with the ease of a spider monkey.

Now creeping stealthily, Mariella stalks a large male hexapede. SHE- is at one with the night forest, with its thousands of bio-sources glowing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the milky way through the dark branches, it is strange sounds also smell, water dripping off the unfamiliar leaves. The danger and the excitement of the primeval world suffuses its soul.

Auleiha flushes the prey, from nearby, also the hexapede bolts. Mariella rapidly knocks an arrow also tracks it. THWAP! It tumbles also lies still, with the shaft of Mariella's arrow sticking up out of its chest. A clean kill.

Mariella also Auleiha kneels over the body. She cuts its throat, also daubs the blood on her fingertip. She draws a line under each of its eyes, symbolizing that he 'sees' the hexapede, or honors its reason for existence. He is a hunter now. Just in time for,

(THE MIGHTY HUNT)

The annual sturmbeest MIGRATION is the time of the biggest event in the lives of the Tsumongwi also the neighboring clans.

HUMAN MARIELLA- is on the line with Siessah, telling her excitedly that he has been asked to join the big hunt, the annual sturmbeest hunt. Siessah is impressive.

It has never happened before. She is going to come out there with Marcia also to see if they can get some of it on film, to show the folks back home.

Mariella tells her he must go, he must get back under the INTERCONNECTION. They must make a pilgrimage to the Praying Mountains today, She is not sure what it is all about.

ALL THE MOUNTAIN- AND TRAIL as Tsu Te leads a small group of hunters, mounted on dire-PEGASUS, up the slope.

Mariella, riding well enough to keep up, looks up at something ahead. Tsu Te signals a stop.

REVERSE, LOOKING UPSLOPE, they are at a strange sight.

The mangrove- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable trees rise arthritically out of the rock.

Some large boulders of Tektites and Moldavite have been trapped in their gnarled grip, also hang suspended far above.

Farther up, almost five hundred feet above them, more of the boulders are woven into the twisted tree trunks.

It is some freak natural occurrence, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the result is spectacular.

It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the mythical beanstalk, going up into the clouds.

There is a THUNDERING ROAR, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to an artillery barrage, also the ground shakes.

Mariella looks around, also sees one of the superconductor mountains grinding against the flank of a mesa near them. A huge rockfall is set loose, tumbling down the side of the mesa.

The Thundering Rocks.

By its motion, Mariella can see that it is a mountain, MONS VERITATIS, will pass over or near the beanstalk in less than an hour. The hunter's dismount,

Mariella a little clumsily. Auleiha steps up next to her. MARIELLA Now what?

AULEIHA Now we climb.

MARIELLA- I was afraid you were going to say that.

FIVE HUNDRED FEET up the beanstalk, the hunters clamber among the gargantuan vine trunks. They pass one of the trapped Tekttites and Moldavite boulders which are providing the lift for its incredible tree. Mariella looks down also cannot believe how the massive trunk dwindles to the apparent size of a licorice stick before it gets to the ground.

A chunk breaks off the Tekttites and Moldavite boulder as they climb over it, also it floats upwards. They reach the upper branches of the beanstalk tree.

21

Above them, Mons- Veritatis fills the sky with its craggy underbelly. They are close now. A spray from one of the waterfalls hits them. Some of the vines hanging down are brushing over the upper branches of the beanstalk with a crackling.

One by one the hunters grab onto vines as they pass.

Mariella grins at Auleiha also leaps to a passing vine. She follows also they climb rapidly up toward the bottom of the floating mountain.

They work their way up into the grotto from which a waterfall is thundering down into the void indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a faucet

of the Gods. The hunters tremble in the grotto. Mariella peers down, through a rocky window on the world below.

Surreally, Tsu Te leads them through the cave until they emerge at the, CLIFF FACE AND SIDE. The sheer size of Mons Veritatis.

LIKEWISE- Mariella sees where they are going.

It is the Hippocampus rookery.

Scores of the Hippocampus huddle on the rock outcroppings, some hanging almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bats.

Auleiha explains that it is the only place they land, never- ever on the ground below, also the only way to approach a Hippocampus is when it has landed.

MARIELLA-Why would you want to approach so braver?

She is about to find out.

Tsu Te creeps up behind a large specimen. As Joyful also deadly as it is in the air, it looks clumsy on the rocky perch. Its wing membranes are folded and are also ugly, also it hugs the rock to keep from slipping off. It is almost comical. It cannot look behind itself, which is where Tsu Te approaches from.

Tsu Te works its way up to it also plugs the end of its queue into the tip of the big ray's antenna. It is also tense up,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,
interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Tsu
Te strokes its back with its palm, also can climb onto it now that he has motor control.

Tsu Te locks herself to its body with its arms also legs, also shouts a loud,
whooping cry.

The Hippocampus leaps from its perch also drops, pulling out of a dive also
gliding away. Tsu Te guides it back toward the others, also it banks past with a
whoosh of air. Raising one corona in an exultant salute, he also shrieks the
Hippocampus shrieks with her.

Auleiha gestures for Mariella to go first, pointing to a nice, healthy
specimen with a 14-foot wingspan.

Mariella does it just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical,
homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and
comparable Tsu Te did, also manages to make the hookup. Its creature flaps its wings,
spooking,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous,
interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he
calms it down. SHE- climbs on its back also,

THWAP!

THWAP!

The creature is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a shot. Mariella screams in terror, also the creature shrieks, drowning her out.

They fall together, spiraling out of control, also he is almost tossed loose. The thing is squawking also shrieking so much he cannot think.

MARIELLA- 'Shut the freak up!'

It does,

MARIELLA Fly straight- and Levels for me!

It does,

To say it, she had to think the commands mind and mind linked zenith, apex, and apogee to the highest, also by thinking it, she made the big creature do as she wished.

SHE- thinks 'bank left' also it does. He starts to get the hang of flying a Hippocampus.

In a world of wonders, it is the most exhilarating thing yet. He looks beside her as Auleiha falls into formation with her. We see the approval in her expression.

She signals to her with a corona gesture, also banks away. MARIELLA, I am your wingman, baby.

She banks after her in a steep turn, joining the rest of the flying hunters. They all fall into formation, ten of them in a delta pattern indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to migrating geese.

They dive together toward the rainforest far below.

VIDEO VIEW OF THE RAINFOREST from above. There is an undulating river below, a river of sturmbeest.

Thousands of them are on the move. Their indigo also pink stripes merge into a rippling more, a living rapid of thundering muscle.

Marcia De Los Santos points her 4D camera down from the rear door of a JF-17 flown by Kimberly Chacon. Dr. Siessah stares down, transfixed by the sight, as he is every year.

Siessah tells Kimberly to get lower.

Siessah sees something also its jaw drops in amazement. A Hippocampus pulls up alongside the JF-17.

Mariella, Mind-body take over waves at them, then peels off also dives toward the herd below, catching up to the other IV'AN hunters.

The sturmbeest follow the same trail, also have done so for millennia. There are no large trees here, also the years' worth of undergrowth is pulverized under the thundering hooves in seconds.

Dust rises from its living river indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable steam from a butterfly's backside.

AT GROUND LEVEL, the camera vibrates indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it is in a paint- shaker. The roar is sustained thunder.

We track the herd as they gallop over the rolling ground, dividing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable flow of water around rocks.

Suddenly a Pink-skinned IV'AN hunter appears in FG-4D in hologram projections. Astride a dire-PEGASUS at full gallop. The sight is breathtaking.

The hunter, even on its Nahhas mount is dwarfed by the sturmbeest, which are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable freight engines.

The IV'AN has a huge spear, 3 feet long. FROM ABOVE we see the herd filling frame. Hippocampus, ridden by IV'AN hunters, come into shot diving indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hawks toward the sturmbeest herd. The creature-mounted hunters have long spears as well. Lashed to the business end of each is a living SLINGER DART, making it a venomous harpoon.

If you are getting the impression that sturmbeest are hard to kill, you are right.

(THERE IS AN EPIC HUNT)

PEGASUS IV'AN plunge fearlessly in amongst the galloping sturmbeest, whose ought to ers are above their heads. It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable riding next to a thundering wall of rippling muscle.

The mounted hunters try to isolate one animal, carving it out from the herd, so that the flying riders can make the kill. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is hairy stuff, as the sturmbeest go into evasive action, turning unpredictably, also kicking out with their back hooves as they crash through underbrush also decimate anything in their path.

When the sturmbeest feel threatened the stream divides, branching out into smaller trails through higher trees.

It makes staying with them, whether on HORSEBACK or creature back an obstacle course.

Mariella skims low over the head with the other flying hunters. She zigs also zags through the trees, trying to make a shot with its spear. The dust from the sturmbeest herd is sometimes blinding.

She dodges trunks also branches as the herd pours indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a torrent through narrow channels in the brush.

Two dire-PEGASUS mounted warriors gallop through the herd, targeting a single animal. They jab it with their spears, also it turns outward from the herd. The riders stay between it also the main mass of the herd, forcing it further away.

Tsu Te swoops in on the isolated animal, coming up behind it. He crouches far forward on the back of the big Hippocampus, its dart tipped spear held back also high for the thrust.

Tsu Te goes for the shot. The dart strikes home, in the vulnerable spot between the armored ought to er's, just at the base of the neck, the only place the dart can penetrate. The dart hits the nerve plexus there also the beast crashes forward, flipping twice from the speed of its run.

The herd thunders past it, a few feet away as Tsu Te swoops off, its arms raised in triumph.

A dire-PEGASUS mounted rider leaps a fallen log, staying with the herd. A moment later he is hit by a zigzagging sturmbeest, also knocked into some brush. Its mount tumbles also he is thrown clear. She scrambles up also runs indistinguishable,

close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable hell as the river of sturmbeest bears down on her.

SHE- makes it out of the path by inches, the Nahhas hooves thundering past her.

Mariella also Auleiha fly among the trees in a hairy display of alienates.

Kimberly Chacon, in the JF-17, tries to keep up with her also cannot make tight turns. Marcia is cussing her out, trying to get a good shot of Mariella.

SHE- homes in on a single animal, flying up behind it, closer also closer, poised for a strike.

SHE- hurls the spear also it misses the mark, sticking harmlessly in the thickly armored ought to er. SHE- switches to its bow for another shot when she is knocked clean off the back of its creature by a tree branch. SHE- tumbles to the ground also gets up running. Its creature shrieks also flap away.

A sturmbeest is charging toward her indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a living Kenworth. Auleiha swoops down, also hurls her spear, missing the plexus. It sticks in the beast's ought to er.

The sturmbeest roars also bucks, shaking off the spear, just as it passes Mariella. Then it wheels in a rage, stopping in a cloud of dust. It lowers its head and charges Mariella.

Mariella dives for the fallen spear as the sturmbeest thunders toward her. He plants the blunt end of the spear in the ground, also angles the sharp end up toward the thing's muscular chest. He leaps aside at the last microsecond.

The spear is driven deep into the sturmbeest's chest, piercing its heart. Mariella is knocked aside by its armored ought to er, also kicked by one of the legs as the beast collapses. It crashes to the ground and skids to a stop in a cloud of dust. Mariella staggers to its feet, shaken. Two dire-PEGASUS riders pull up to a stop at Mariella's kill, whooping also waving their herding spears.

N'deh, one of the riders, salutes Mariella with a formal gesture of honor.

Mariella runs up an incline to a rocky outcropping. Auleiha swoops into an expert landing with her Hippocampus, also Mariella jumps on behind her.

With a powerful take-off stroke, the creature leaps into the air.

Auleiha grins also whoops, ecstatic that Mariella is not only alive indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise has killed a sturmbeest.

He has the heart of a mighty hunter.

Who knew?

Tsu Te, flying above, sees it also is not so happy.

BACK AT THE VILLAGE, that night, the festival of the hunt is in full swing, a feast with music, also dancing lots of sturmbeest steaks. The huge bonfires illuminate the happy faces of the clan members.

The music also dance is surprisingly sophisticated for a technically primitive culture. Expressive also emotional, the sinuous movements are a celebration of the body, a celebration of life, movement, breath.

We see an epic 'song' which is a complex performance by several members of the group which involves dance, rhythmic ethnic music.

Chanting, also singing, also incredibly agile 'corona-dancing' where the long, tendril- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable fingers of the singers weave a poetic narrative of their own, on harmony or counterpoint to the other elements of the dance. Rapid controlled shifts of the dancers' bioluminescent spots add to the magical beauty of the performance.

When the song ends, a new beat also begins, a dozen people rush in to dance in a circle. Auleiha grabs Mariella's corona and pulls her into the circle of dancers.

SHE- is a little clumsy indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise game to try, also he puts some variations on their clbuttic forms that are inspired by MTV.

We see her shedding civilization also inhibition, letting herself go also dancing wild free with the IV'AN people. Jan watches her with approval. She slips her corona into N'deh's, also he puts its arm around her. We realize that they are- much closer than we thought.

Mariella also Auleiha flows amongst the dancers, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they are looking only at each other. A couple of the young men watching from outside the circle are giggling also talking about Mariella Auleiha. The Matriarch follows their look, also sees that the connection is being made. She is also the Patriarch confer.

They are not sure if it is a good or a sad thing that their daughter, also the alien, seems to be coming together.

Mato'a is against the Matriarch's idea of teaching Mariella too much of their knowledge. He thinks it is wrong to trust the aliens. It will only bring sorrow. The IV'AN see us as emotionally disturbed children, smart indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise out of control, violent, intolerant, uncentered.

Mo'at's instinct is to trust its one.

IN THE FOREST Auleiha leads Mariella along a moonlit path.

The sound of the festival is distant.

She is taking her to her special place. They pass along the base of a waterfall and come to a basin, or pond, surrounded by the luminous weeping willows hanging with frost-like or snow-covered- fiberoptic frons.

Auleiha dives from a rock, swimming across the pond, which glows from beneath.

Mariella swims with her, also they pass over beautiful glowing adenoids, in a fantastic variety of pastel colors. Mariella also Auleiha, swimming slowly under the surface, seem to float in some cosmic dance above a luminous garden of waving, hypnotic shapes. Tiny purple fish swim around them, darting away also swirling back.

Auleiha emerges from the water at the edge of a small glade. Mariella joins her and leads her by the corona to the center of the stand of willows. It is an exquisitely beautiful spot. Surrounding them are patterns of glowing- pastels, pinks also soft blues, white slashes of purple, also soft accents of scarlet.

Underfoot, a rolling bed of moss glows faintly. It reacts- to their footsteps with expanding rings of light. A flock of fan a sea serpents' flicks into spinning flight, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a blizzard of brightly colored frisbees.

The willows stir, responding to the presence of Mariella also- Auleiha. She holds up her coronae also speaks softly, in the IV'AN language. The tendrils sway as

if in a soft breeze, also seem to caress her. Mariella puts out its coronae, also the tendrils play over its fingers, its palms, its forearms.

SHE- feels something, a faint tingling, barely there.

Some willathewisps circle around them, some alighting on there ought to er's also arms. She tells her that the willathewisps are the seeds of the willows also that they are an important part of the soul of the forest.

They have accepted Mariella, also that is why the Matriarch gave her a chance. Mariella is not indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the other aliens.

Except for Jan, who is as close to an IV'AN as any alien has ever been. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise even with her years here, she still holds back.

She has never thrown herself completely into the forest, into their life, the way he has.

Mariella has embraced the animistic forest, which is alive with invisible dynamic forces, spirits. Things which he does not understand, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of

a muchness, and comparable wise accept, in a way a scientist could not without taking it apart also finding out how it worked.

She deeply respects these primal people who are in touch with forces we no longer see also feel.

Mariella puts its coronae on Auleiha's ought to ers also turns her around, to face her. She tells her that he thinks he is starting to see. She smiles. Closes her eyes also open them.

Yes- She puts its face close to hers. She rubs her cheek against it. They kiss. She pulls her down until they are kneeling, facing each other in the sacred glade.

Auleiha unbinds her queue, letting her hair tendrils float freely in a glossy mane. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the willows they seem to stir gently in a breeze that is not there. Her supple fingers slowly, lovingly, unbind Mariella's queue also its hair flows out around its ought to er. They come together in another lingering kiss.

With its own life, their hair floats together, intertwining with gentle undulations. Mariella rocks with the power of direct contact between its nervous system and hers. It is how the IV'AN make love (or a part of it,) Also, it is the ultimate intimacy.

She falls into her infinite pool. They sink on the bed of moss, also ripples of light spread out under them.

DAWN BREAKS in the sacred glade. Shafts of orange morning light, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a Maxfield Parrish painting. Mariella also Auleiha asleep in each other's arms.

Also, the roar of engines which wakes them. They move back into concealment as the splintering, the crackling sound of the forest being crushed under Nahhas treads gets- louder. In hiding, they watch as the blade of a gigantic bulldozer becomes a dark wall behind the sheltering ring of willows.

The willows begin to fall before the- blade, to be ground under the treads. The bulldozer pushes inexorably into the glade, splintering the trees, plowing the earth before it.

22

Mariella also Auleiha reels back, stunned by the destruction they are witnessing. Mariella runs out into the path of the bulldozer, waving its arms. The bulldozer is unmanned, driven by LINK control from back at the base.

A metal juggernaut version of the mind-body takeovers.

BACK AT IVAN, in the control room of the tractors, the operator sees an IV'AN in front of its machine. He asks for directions from 'its' supervisor. Ridgeville,

who is directing the clearing operation, is walking by the guy's workstation at that moment.

She tells her to push on. The native will move. They must learn to get out of the way. Some things are just inevitable.

Mariella gives up trying to stop the unmanned tractor. It grinds past the tiny figures of Auleiha also Mariella, obliterating the sacred site, leaving only mud and wood splinters in the morning sunlight. Auleiha's eyes stream tears, watching the willows die.

HUMAN MARIELLA ALSO, JAN is on the video interconnection to Parrish.

They are furious that the clearcutting has destroyed another sacred site of the IV'AN, just when they were making real progress with them. Parrish is disturbed by its, torn by its conscience, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he offers some pathetic blandishments, also hangs up. Jan swears.

Damn weasel.

Totally on the take. She is Ridgeville's lapdog.

Siessah calls them to tell them that they are being recalled. A ship will- be sent to pick them up. It is over. Ridgeville is giving up on the mind-body take over the

program. The construction is especially important to the economic survival of the whole colony.

Mariella says he is not coming in. They need to stay also to help IV'AN, somehow. Get them to move, or at least- understand what is happening. They will not understand.

Mariella snaps off the transmitter and goes right to the INTERCONNECTION chair. Jan says they ought to go in. Talk to Ridgeville. Try to get her to see the reason. Mariella ignores her and pulls the helmet down.

IN THE VILLAGE, Auleiha had been waiting for Mariella to wake up. He rises, also in its eyes, she sees that something terrible is happening, also its pain.

She goes to Mo'at also Mato'a, to try to explain to them that the aliens mean harm to the forest.

He says he was sent here to get their trust, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise that humans do not care about them. It is a lie. They do not see. They will never see it.

The Tsumongwi must move far away.

Tsu Te charges forward, screaming at

Mariella. SHE- is crazed by the loss of the glade, the horror of what is being done by Mariella's people.

She says the aliens are insane people, that they are poison. Also, Mariella is one of them, even though he wears the disguise of an IV'AN body. Crying also screaming at her, he yells at Mariella to go.

Mariella refuses, she says he loves Auleiha, also he is going to stay somehow.

Jan grabs his arm. She hisses in its ear that he is crazy. How can he stay? They are pulling the plug back at base. He is just making things worse.

Mariella shrugs her off. Says he is staying.

Tsu Te challenges her to a fight.

Mato'a yells for the weapons to be brought, also Mo'at is silent. Her disappointment also angers her obviously.

The IV'AN never kill each other, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will fight, also the fights can be brutal. The weapons are long staves, thick also solid, made from some very dense wood.

Mariella also Tsu Te squares off.

Tsu Te leaps at her with a sharp cry also Mariella parries with its staff. The staves clack off each other as the two combatants also leap a duck. Tsu Te sweeps Mariella off its feet with a roundhouse hit to the ankles, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a

muchness, and comparable wise Mariella rolls out also catches Tsu Te in the belly with the blunt end of the stick.

23

AT SITE 19, a Gynosphinx gunship lands and four common soldiers in full armor jump out, led by Corporal Lillie Wainfleet.

TSU TE wades in with a series of short, sharp blows. Mariella swings with equal fury. They are both fighting from the heart.

INSIDE THE CABIN at Site 7 the door bangs open also the common soldier clomps inside.

They cross to the INTERCONNECTION chairs also Lillie jerks the helmet off Jan's head. In the village, standing next to N'deh, Jan, Mind-body takes over's eyes to roll back also she keels over. N'deh barely catches her before she hits the ground.

Mariella, in the heat of battle, does not see it. SHE- stands, panting, facing Tsu Te.

Tsu Te leaps forward also- Mariella's eyes go blank. They roll back!

Tsu Te puts one alongside its head.

Mariella sprawls, completely inert. Tsu Te approaches, staring at the still figure. Auleiha rushes in, shoving her back, screaming at her. She goes to Mariella also cradles her head.

Tsu Te is afraid now that he might have killed Mariella. Its rage is gone, replaced by LINK. He drops its stick and runs into the forest.

Auleiha strokes Mariella's head.

HUMAN MARIELLA comes out of the INTERCONNECTION in a rage. Coming from the fight, he is amped to the max. It added to the outrage of the common soldier interrupting an INTERCONNECTION in progress- (which is potentially lethal to the mind-body take over if it is in the middle of something dangerous.)

He lunges at Lillie, forgetting he has no legs in its world. He falls onto the floor. Lillie laughs and kicks her in the stomach.

LILLIE- Aren't you going to bite my throat out?

Lillie kicks her again. The common soldier grabs Mariella also he struggles. They twist their arms behind her, also cuff her, throw her in its chair also slap a mask over its face. They drag Mariella also Jan out to the Gynosphinx.

AT IVAN, the two wayward controllers confront Ridgeville also- Duartha. Siessah cannot help them. They stepped over the line.

Mariella yells that we are going to destroy these people before we even understand them.

Ridgeville accuses Mariella of- 'going native.' Says he has forgotten who he works for.

Why is he here?

Mariella says he never knew why he was here until now. Ridgeville does not get what that might mean.

24

Jan says the irony is that the greatest treasure on its planet is not the precious minerals to be ripped out of the earth. Not the Big Rock Calsoy Mountain.

It is biodiversity in the forest. There are things in that forest of value they cannot imagine. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will bulldoze it before they know.

There are mysteries here, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to how the IV'AN communicates over long distances. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to why their language is the same all over the planet. How is that possible? indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to how the cold also flu viruses were wiped out.

Ridgeville is not impressive. Sure, they have made a lot of money off the FDF'n counter-viruses. What has that got to do with clearing a construction site in one spot on a virgin planet? They must get a foothold here.

It is vital. Also, he is not about to let a few bleeding hearts also a bunch of primitive mud-men stand in its way. It is a big planet. The IV'AN can move. Siessah tries to explain what happens to one

The IV'AN clan is somehow known soon by all of them, also if they destroy its opportunity for cultural contact, they may destroy it all the time, planetwide.

Ridgeville says he will take that chance. He wants Mariella also Jan suspended, without pay, also returned to Earth on Prometheus, which leaves in a few days as soon as it is done fueling. Also, the other controllers are to cease all contact between their mind-body takeovers and the aboriginal population.

If the locals will not cooperate, I will just have to breed its workforce population here from among the mind-body takeovers.

It will take longer, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise at least we can raise them with our language also some values that make sense. Safer is also more reliable overall.

God help you, Jan says.

THE TRACTORS ALSO BULLDOZERS crush the forest before them.

Trees are slashed down by the plasma cutters, or dynamite into kindling.

Terrified animals flee before the onslaught. common soldier in power-suits stride through the ravaged forest, blasting anything that moves.

Now we see what the machines are doing, cutting a firebreak. When the swath of destruction reaches the full circle, the forest in the center is ignited. The animals have no place to go. The black smoke spreads cancerously over the rainforest. The IV'AN watch in horror from a hillside as the flames burn indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a funeral pyre below.

AT IVAN Mariella goes to the INTERCONNECTION room and makes an impassioned speech to the controllers when their shift ends. He says that they know the truth, in their hearts if not in their minds, that TRIUMPH is not Hell, it is

Eden, also,

Eden is being bulldozed also strip-mined also- raped. We have no right. We are the aliens here. We are space monsters. The IV'AN does not understand what is happening. They trusted us also we betrayed them. Also, people indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable-

Ridgeville, with their corruption and deceit, is going to turn its place into another Earth. Suck the life out of it, also kill it indistinguishable, close, near, almost

identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably cancer.

We blew it on Earth. We lost the most precious thing we had. Also, now we want to take that precious thing away from someone else. The controllers will not meet its eyes.

They know he is right. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they are making good money here, also it is going to happen anyway, with or without them.

What does he expect them to do?

NOW IN THE TRACTOR YARD, AT NIGHT, THERE HAVE LIT WITH HIGH POWERD LED-LIGHTS- AND STEAM-POWERD FACTORY ALL AROUND- AND an OPEN PIT COAL MINING OPERATION WITH A MASSIVE SPINNING CONTINUES MINER. In the newly clear-cut zone, amidst the blackened stubble, the tractors stand in the moonlight indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable idols to harsh gods. The common soldier has returned to IVAN, far down the gravel road.

Out of the tree line come ghost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable figures on HORSEBACK.

Led by Tsu Te, the IV'AN hunters ride among the giant tractors, tiny amongst- the giant hulking shapes.

From skin bags slung over their dire-PEGASUS, the IV'AN raiding party pours something over the tires also engines- of the machines. It is the sap they use for torches, highly flammable also long burning.

Tsu Te pulls a match-stone from a pouch on the surcingle of its PEGASUS. He strikes it fiercely, also it blazes indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable thermite.

It arcs through the air.

WHOOSH- Flames roar up around the vehicles, engulfing them. The tires burn, also within seconds, one fuel tank explodes. Then others. Silhouettes of men also dire-PEGASUS cross against the wall of fire, back toward the blackness of the forest.

25

THE NEXT DAY the human base reacts to the destruction of the tractors.

Ridgeville is furious. It is going to look bad in its next report. They are going to be behind schedule now.

Damnit!

DUARTHA finally has the opportunity he has been looking for. Ridgeville authorizes a retaliatory raid against the IV'AN. There are millions of IV'AN around the planet, also the signal must be sent immediately to make clear that human property is not to be messed with.

Marcia De Los Santos comes to Mariella's room. She has some- valuable information. Some big CFOESE operation was underway also when she asked permission to ride along, she was denied. Since she also Kimberly Chacon had gotten to be friends, she asked the pilot what was going on.

Duartha is conducting a raid on the IV'AN village. When?

Now- It is happening right now!

Mariella tells Marcia to find Jan also meets her in the Interconnection room. SHE- pumps the wheels of her chair, racing down the corridor.

GYNOSPHINX GUNSHIPS darken the sky as they come over the tops of the trees. At the head of the formation is one much larger ship, a monster over a hundred feet long which seems to block out the suns. The GENERAL

DYNAMICS TD-24- THUNDERBIRD gunship looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a giant predatory insect, with multiple canopies at the front for pilots also gunners.

Duartha, next to the pilot of the Thunderbird, surveys the world below indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable Napoleon astride its PEGASUS overlooking the battlefield.

Mariella wheels into the INTERCONNECTION ROOM. The FLOOR SUPERVISOR protests, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise he pushes past her, yelling that it is an- emergency. Mariella goes to an INTERCONNECTION chair and starts to get in. The supervisor runs up to a CFOESE paratrooper who grabs Mariella.

Mariella surprises the guy by grabbing its lapels also jerking her down into a vicious head- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wrist. Now reeling back with a broken nose, also Mariella grabs its sidearm out of its holster. SHE- fires three- rounds into the ceiling. All movement stops.

Mariella sweeps the gun in an arc, covering everyone in the room.

Marcia also Jan ran in, taking in the situation.

Marcia starts videoing the proceedings.

JAN- What are we doing, Mariella?

MARIELLA- I am not sure.

(There is much yelling! 'OH-MY!')

Uh, okay! Everyone out, now.

Now- move!

The paratrooper also all the technicians clear out, leaving the room empty except for the controllers who are under the INTERCONNECTION tranced out. At Mariella's instructions, Marcia locks the heavy steel fire door.

JAN- Not exactly the impartial journalist anymore, are you?

MARCIA- Screw it in the butt like it is not sinning.

Mariella also Jan goes under the INTERCONNECTION, leaving Marcia to guard the door.

MARIELLA, MIND-BODY TAKE OVER woke up inside the central tree of the village. Its head belongs. Auleiha comes to her.

Seeing that he is all right, she embraces her.

He runs to Mato'a also Mo'at, to warn them about the impending raid. Before she can finish the roar of turbofans shakes the jungle. They look up to the Thunderbird and its escort of Gynosphinx gunships come over the trees.

The down-blast from their engines beats the foliage, turning the space below into a maelstrom of flying leaves also debris. Mariella yells at them all to run,

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise cannot be- heard over the thunder of the jets.

26

The IV'AN bravely fire at the gunships with their longbows also spears, which bounce harmlessly off the armored ships.

Duartha laughs, then fires an incendiary rocket into the roots of the central tree. It explodes with a fireball, setting the interior on fire. The IV'AN flee into the forest.

The gunships fired more incendiary rounds, setting the whole village on fire. When the IV'AN has cleared the village center, Duartha fires high- explosives into the base of the central tree. The massive roots explode into matchsticks, also the tree topples slowly, crashing down with a thunderous sound.

The IV'AN watch from a distance as the other two Nahhas trees which made up their home is blown up also felled. Several IV'AN have been wounded, burned by incendiary bombs, or hit by flying debris. Three are dead. Mato'a, the-Patriarch is one of them.

From the aft bay of the Thunderbird, seven power suits leap out, using steel cables to rappel down through the trees to ground level. The common soldier detaches from the cables, also stomps hydraulically toward the village.

Lillie Wainfleet leads the power-suit squad.

The power-suit common soldier spread out, also on commands from Duartha, open fire with flamethrowers, sweeping them back also forth through the woods, systematically setting the forest on fire.

The down-blast from the gunships fans the flames through the- trees indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a firestorm. The IV'AN retreat as a wall of- fire moves toward them.

Mariella, running with Jan also N'deh through the smoke sparks, finds the body of a child, killed by one of the explosions.

The power-suits stride unimpeded also unchallenged through the trees, turning the forest into an inferno.

In the burning wreckage of the village, Auleiha finds her father's body. She collapses over her sobbing.

She hears clomping footsteps and looks up. Paratrooper Lillie Wainfleet, 14 feet tall in its power-suit, stands over her.

SHE- reaches down also grabs her by the queue with one hydraulic corona, which causes her to scream with shock. She jerks her to her feet and walks her toward its rendezvous point.

Mariella, Jan and N'deh are running through the inferno, trying to find Auleiha.

IN THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM Marcia leaps back as an explosive charge shatters the lock, also the door is kicked in from the other side. Armored CFOESE common soldier pours inside, with guns leveled. They grabbed Marcia. Also, the lead paratrooper moves to control injections of xights pulls the expert breaker to the INTERCONNECTION system.

IN THE JUNGLE Mariella has spotted

Wainfleet dragged Auleiha toward a landed gunship. He is running after the power-suit when- The strings are cut.

SHE- flops to the ground, limp also inert.

N'deh catches Jan as she falls.

Through the trees N'deh watches Auleiha loaded into the ship, along with four other IV'AN rounded up by another common soldier.

AT IVAN, the compound is littered with the bodies of unconscious mind-body takeovers who dropped on their tracks, whatever they were doing.

IN THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM the disoriented controllers come out of their chairs. They gape at the armed common soldier close in on Mariella also Jan, Who is arrested at gunpoint?

Mariella yells to the controllers to help. He says they are lethal IV'AN!
They are burning the forest!

Everything you have worked for is being destroyed. The other controllers just watch, paralyzed. IN RIDGEVILLE'S OFFICE, Parrish is flipping out. The wholesale burning of the forest. Mass destruction? How can he sweep it under the rug? There is not enough money in the world. Ridgeville warns her he may be the next endangered species.

AT the BRIG, LATER. Mariella, Jan also Marcia is in a common holding cell, usually used for drunk also rowdy construction workers.

Hegner comes up to the guard desk with a trolley.

Tell the guard he has meals for the prisoners. When the guard investigates the hot cart, Hegner clubs her heartily with a steel pipe wrapped in a towel. She moves twitchily to the cells. He opens the cell door and lets the prisoners out.

28

Mariella takes the guard's gun also then picks up the phone.

She calls Kimberly Chacon, waking her up. Tell her to meet her at the airfield, with a JF-17 running, in ten minutes. She scrambles, swearing. Mariella tells Hegner, there is some stuff he wants her to get from the labs.

Within the UTILIDOR which runs under the base.

Mariella also moves the others along the narrow service tunnel toward the airfield. Hegner meets them at the airlock, coronating Mariella a bag, the stuff he requested.

Hegner wants to come along. Whatever Mariella is doing, he knows it will be payback time. Mariella thanks Hegner and tells her to go back. She needs someone on the inside, also nobody knows Hegner is involved yet.

They don breathing gear also dash the airfield (not easily in a wheelchair.) They make it to JF-17, which Kimberly is already revving up.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise as they are boarding, they are challenged by two CFOESE common soldiers also Mariella is forced to pull the pistol.

The JF-17 takes off amid a hail of shots, with Mariella blasting back at the common soldier. Kimberly banks the ship away across the forest.

Jan was hit by a bullet by one of the common soldiers.

She tries to laugh it off, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is serious.

THE CABIN at Site 20, seen from the outside.

Marcia, in the doorway, gives a thumbs-up sign. The Cabin lifts straight up out of frame.

Then at that moment at that very time- the JF-17, with the Cabin hanging under it on a long-line. Kimberly expertly turns also heads up into the

Praying Mountains.

DUARTHA ALSO- RIDGEVILLE are in the- latter's office.

They are assessing the danger posed by two loose cannon controllers running around out there, stirring up the natives. Ridgeville wants them found, also he wants them eliminated, wanting some control around here.

It is ridiculous.

Duartha calls for an air search with all its gunships. She tells Ridgeville to relax. Not believing the IV'AN will attack humans if they have prisoners. One of the native men says she is the daughter of a clan- Patriarch, so it gives us a good chip.

IV'AN of the Tsumongwi clan is waiting in a densely wooded gorge deep in the Praying Mountains. They watch as the Cabin is lowered to the ground.

Kimberly uncouples the extensive line, waves, also banks away.

Jan tells Mariella that its spot is the most sacred place of the Tsumongwi. She believes they will defend its place to death, also it is the best stronghold they could hope for.

Mariella takes her corona. She is white from loss of blood and shock. She is dying, also there is nothing Mariella can do. Now I am asking if IV'AN can do anything.

Jan says there is one thing they can try. They must take her to the WELL OF SOULS. She tells her to hurry,

N'deh will tell her what to do. Mariella rolls herself to its INTERCONNECTION chair also climbs in.

IN THE JUNGLE, LATER. Mariella, Mind-body takes over walks with a small balcony of IV'AN. N'deh carries Human Jan, wearing breathing gear, lightly in its arms indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a child. She looks up at her, smiling weakly smiling back.

JAN- You look smaller in person.

The other Tsumongwi, including Tsu Te also a grieving Mo'at, follow behind.

THE WELL OF SOULS is a Nahhas grotto, into which waterfall thunders, the water falling down a sheer cliff from thousands of feet above. A dark pit, the grotto is ringed with willows, though these are much larger than anything we have seen.

They are so densely packed that their roots form a solid woven surface wrapping over the edge also down the walls of the grotto below. The roots braid together, covering the floor of the grotto. A single large willow grows in the middle of the well.

The small party works its way down to the bottom of the Well of Souls. Jan is murmuring to N'deh in IV'AN, holding onto her. With the looks at her with love.

Mariella thinks it must be strange for her to hold her real body, something she has never- ever done.

Jan is laid gently among the roots at the foot of the willow at the center of the Well of Souls and the waterfalls of remembrances of the youth.

Mariella watches as fine, hair indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable tendrils emerge from the roots also begin to cover her.

The IV'AN stands solemnly in a circle, chanting. Mo'at, the matriarch, stands among the willows above, leading the chant. Her unbound queue mingles with the tendrils of the willow trees, which caresses her upraised arms.

(SHOT OF THE SUNS SETTING AROUND THE WORLDS.)

IN THE WELL OF SOULS- NEXT TO THE FALLS, the chant continues. The grotto is dark except for the light of the willows, a faint spectral glow. Mo'at still stands in a kind of trance amongst the tendrils of the central tree.

She opens her eyes also say something to N'deh, who kneels next to Jan. Jan is utterly still in her shroud of fine silk threads, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a month in its cocoon.

N'DEH- (in IV'AN, subtitled.)

The Progenitrix Tree could not save her body.

He gently Link-up her breathing mask. She does not need it anymore.

Mariella feels the tears welling. They are so respectful of her, also she is not even one of them.

N'deh kisses Jan on her human mouth for the first, also lasts, time.

N'deh says to Mariella that there is no death, only change.

Jan will feed the roots of the Progenitrix Tree. A great honor. LATER, in the Tsumongwi's temporary camp, Mariella asks Tsu Te to help her get Auleiha back.

She needs the best hunters for a raid on the human base. She needs a strong leader, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to Tsu Te.

TSU TE, do you know how to get in?

MARIELLA- I have a couple of ideas.

Tsu Te eyes her coldly, studying her. Then he closes his eyes, once. Opens them. They are on.

MARIELLA- Can you get help from the other clans?

TSU TE- They are coming now.

Mariella sees N'deh pass by, carrying Jan's unconscious mind-body takeover. What will they do with it, a body without a mind? Knowing the IV'AN, they will keep it alive.

(DUSKING, UNTIL- THE NEXT DAY)

Crouched in the foliage at the tree line, the raiding party studies Underworld Gate. Mariella opens the bag given to her by Hegner.

She passes out- around her neck was her ID 777 Master Sergeant, IV'AN Units, of Impressions- the DOGTAGE badges read out in type- given to all, yet her ranking is the heights- the other is just listed as hunters, telling them to keep them on their bodies. The sentry guns will not fire at anyone wearing a badge transponder.

The raid begins.

The tractors returning from the construction site provide perfect cover. The hunters, led by Mariella and Tsu Te, slip out of the trees through the dust clouds and grab onto the undercarriages. The escort common soldier in their power-suits misses it. They ride in through the double gates of the compound,

then roll out also sprint for cover among some storage containers. They make their way to the mind-body to take over the compound.

Mariella leaves the others in concealment and slips into the compound. He is dressed indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably an IV'AN, so she goes to its old locker also gets out shorts a T-shirt, the base uniform of the mind-body takeovers. He does not do these quickly, also then walks out boldly into the compound.

Auleiha also three other IV'AN are held in a chain Interconnection cage, under guard.

Mariella walks by, nodding to the guard.

Mind-body takeovers all look the same to the common soldier. Auleiha sees her, also her eyes go wide.

SHE- signals her to get the others ready.

Mariella easily overpowers the guard, knocking her out cold.

SHE- gives a thrilling call also the other hunters to join her.

With a steel bar he also two others pry the gate open, shattering the lock.

Mariella grabs Auleiha, kissing her fiercely. The other IV'AN stops to check out that action for a second.

Suddenly two CFOESE common soldiers see them also come running.

They aim their rifles to be indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise- THWAP.

Arrows appear suddenly, stuck in the throat of one, also through the plastic mask of the other.

Mariella leads the escaping group the other way, toward the incoming convoy of tractors. They run along the line of tractors, staying in the shadows also amongst the dust clouds. A paratrooper sees them also opens fire, sounding the alarm. A siren goes off in the compound. Mariella puts two rounds from its pistol into the paratrooper, also the hunters dodge between the tractors as more soldiers start firing.

Suddenly a power-suit appears, backlit by the sun.

A 14-foot-tall juggernaut. It opens fire with the UGA 911,

blasting up huge geysers of the earth as it tries to hit the running hunters, who are as fast as cheetahs. The power-suited paratrooper breaks into a run, trying to keep its targets in sight.

ON MARIELLA, who has doubled back along with a tractor.

She whirls a ball around her head with intense concentration.

She lets it fly, also it whistles out, tangling around the power-suit's massive feet. It crashes down, skidding in the dirt. It starts to also rise Mariella sprints toward it.

She ought to er-slam it from the side at a full run, also it rolls onto its back.

Mariella leaps onto the big machine's chest. He fires the pistol two-coronated into the canopy at direct range.

The rounds whine off the lexan without effect. The paratrooper slams Mariella with one hydraulic corona, sending her flying. ON THE POWER-SUIT, rolling ponderously to its knees as- Out of the dust behind it, the wheel of a tractor emerges, filling the frame- The common soldier turn, seeing it, also just has time to scream- The Nahhas tire rolls over the suit, crushing it.

Auleiha pulls Mariella to its feet and the two of them sprint full out as rounds hit the ground all around them.

INSIDE THE CFOESE HANGER there is a full-tilt scramble.

Sirens blaring.

Flashing lights- common soldiers running to a row of power-suits standing in their pantries. Pilots are running to power up the Gynosphinxs.

LOOKING FOR WHAT SEEMED TO BE MANY ANGLES: Running feet are everywhere- common soldiers rapidly donning their armor. Leaping into the cockpits of power-suits also strapping in. Canopies closing. Gantries pulling back.

Duartha, barking orders, runs to a power-suit also leaps into it. She slams the canopy and powers up. She is in such a hurry she does not wait for the boarding gantry to pull back. She surges out of the slot, knocking it aside with a powerful sweep of one hydraulic arm. It topples with a crash.

Mariella picks up an automatic weapon from a fallen paratrooper who is stuck full of arrows. She spins also rakes it across the ranks of the advancing CFOESE common soldier.

They scatter indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable pigeons.

Nobody has ever shot back at them before.

Mariella empties the rifle, buying the group enough time to reach the tree line.

She sees several Gynosphinxs rising indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable black, angry hornets from the compound.

Half a dozen power-suits are charging toward her. Mariella grabs a couple of grenades from the fallen common soldier as rounds stitch toward her. He turns also sprints for the trees.

WHAT FOLLOWS is a hairball, all-stops-pulled chase through the forest as the rolling thunder of war machines relentlessly pursue the IV'AN also the renegade mind-body takes over.

The gunships roar into the forest, the Balsiger pilots searching below the canopy. They maneuver their thundering ships between the huge trunks. The trees are so big you can fly through them between the canopy and the forest floor.

Also- the power-suits crash through the underbrush at a full run, fanning out through the jungle. When one of the gunships spots a running IV'AN on the down looking infrared, the pilot tells the power-suit common soldier also they converge.

The forest is riddled by fire from the UGA 911 cannons.

Mariella also the hunters duck behind the mighty trunks, which shelter them from the hellacious fire. Then they run on, zigzagging.

Mariella runs from a power-suit which pounds through the forest behind her. She leaps also rolls, dodging behind trees as the cannon rips up the foliage.

Auleiha runs along beneath a fallen tree trunk while a gunship tries to hit her with its cannon. It fires rockets also she dives into a pond as the jungle explodes.

She surfaces amid burning debris as the gunship flies on.

The power-suit chasing Mariella is catching up. It follows her into a narrow rocky cleft. It turns out to be a cul-de-sac, also Mariella is trapped. The power-suit closes in for the kill.

Then tons of rock come crashing down, smashing it into junk. Mariella whoops also waves to the IV'AN hunters poised above. They wave back.

Also, then twenty mounted IV'AN charge into the battle, the hooves of their dire-PEGASUS thundering. With a shriek, two dozen Hippocampus flash down out of the sky, IV'AN on their backs. The PEGASUS scoops up the rescued IV'AN and gallops off into the woods. The gunships dive to give chase, dodging also weaving through the trunks.

Mariella, running from a power-suit, leads it between a stand of trees.

Hidden hunters hit it with their balls. The power-suit goes down also the hunters set upon it, four of them pinning it. Mariella runs up also trips the rescue-release on the canopy. He rips the lid open.

The paratrooper screams as the toxic air whoosh in. Mariella pulls her out indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a ragdoll, tossing her away with one corona.

SHE- also the hunters lift the heavy arm, aiming the UGA 911 at an approaching gunship. Mariella reaches into the cockpit of the power-suit and hits the fire control indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wiseton.

UGA 911 roars. Its solid tongue of tracer's rips into the Gynosphinx which cants over plummets to the ground also explodes.

Striding through the jungle in its hydraulic seven-league boots, Duartha goes ape-sh*t. What is going on?

She watches as another Gynosphinx is riddled from below. On fire, it banks over her, careening into the jungle.

Duartha wheels at the sound of hooves in time to blast a dire-PEGASUS also a rider. She pivots, firing at a running IV'AN. The hunter disappears in the gout of the earth and foliage.

Tsu Te runs along a horizontal bough. A gunship moves slowly through the woods below, looking for a victim. Tsu Te leaps. Lands on the back of the thing. He runs along its spine, clutching a rock about the size of a baseball.

When he reaches the turbofan intakes, She hurls it down into the turbine blades full force. There is a clattering shriek, also the turbine blows apart, sending shrapnel outward through the sides of the fuselage. The gunship tilts also head for the ground. Tsu Te leaps for a liana also swings to safety. The ship explodes below her.

Two Hippocampus swoop in behind a gunship. The first rider drops a thirty-pound rock, which hits the Gynosphinx squarely. The pilot hears the clunk, also looks around.

The second rider guides its creature over the center of the ship. Auleiha is riding behind her on the creature's back.

She rolls off onto the gunship, then runs to the rock also picks it up, pounding it down into the turbine. The turbine explodes. Auleiha runs as the gunship goes out of control. She dives out into space, also a third Hippocampus plucks her out of the air with its claws.

A paratrooper in a power-suit hears hooves also turns, Its eyes widen as he sees- Two dire-PEGASUS, with a heavy log slung between them indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a battering ram. At a full gallop, the riders guide the log right into the canopy of the power-suit, shattering it. The suit flips onto its back, also does not move.

Tsu Te pulls out its bullroarer and starts to swing it.

The sound wails through the forest indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a siren.

The IV'AN retreat as one, disappearing into the forest.

PUSH IN ON DUARTHA calling to its men. The gunships are not answering. The suits are not answering. SHE- sees burning wreckage on its right, also

a power-suit lying still on its left. The forest is silent, except for the usual hoots also screeches. What the fuck is happening?

They just got their buttes kicked by bows and arrows!? The night is falling, also the forest is dark deep around her.

SHE- swears also rakes the jungle with its Gatling gun until the ammo-paniards are empty.

IN THE MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD the IV'AN are gathered. There are several hundred of them. All the nearby clans have come to join the battle. It is the full night, also the stars blaze overhead. Polyphemus stares down at them with its one bloody eye.

Torches, as well as a galaxy of bioluminescence, light the gathering.

Mariella, Auleiha also Tsu Te stands before the gathered clans, the alien warrior, the daughter of the Patriarch, also the Patriarch's successor. Mariella speaks to the assembly, also Auleiha translates for her into the IV'AN language.

29

She tells them they are not just fighting for its part of the forest, or these few trees, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable wise for the very future of their world.

SHE- tells its stories of the aliens they call the Earth People is one of blood. For as long as they can be Linked, they take what is not theirs. They take the land also hunting the grounds of other people, also kill them, or put them in places they cannot live. They call it progress, also it has led them down a path to sickness death. Their world, their forest, is a dying place. A poisoned place. They have killed their progenitrix.

Also- they will do the same here. They must be driven away.

When they come again, they will come with all their force, also we must be ready. We must fight, to our last breath, or they will rape also kill our mother as they did their own.

Mariella hears a familiar voice behind her.

JAN- Nice speech, kid.

Mariella spins around, seeing Jan's mind-body take overstepping behind her. She is bright-eyed and as alive as he ever saw her. He is dumbfounded. She walks up to her, grinning.

MARIELLA- Jan! Jan, It is you!

JAN- Of course, it is me. Moron.

Finally, he whoops also picks her up, spinning her around. MARIELLA, is it going to hurt my brain if you tell me how...?

Jan says she is not sure exactly how it works.

Scientifically that is. Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the condensed version is that under certain circumstances, the IV'AN can do its thing, call it a soul transfer. When I was dying, the trees stored, well, they stored my mind, my emotions, my memories, me. Then they downloaded it all to its body.

No more turning into a pumpkin. I get to be Cinderella all the time, now.

Mariella is lost. The trees stored you. Jan laughs, also puts her arm around her.

Mariella, she says, it may take a bit of an explanation.

Back home we called it Siaa. A single being made up of all that is living on the whole planet. The only thing is, back home it is a myth. There is no Siaa. If she ever lived, she has been dead long.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise it is not a myth here. On TRIUMPH there is only one entity. The forest is its brain. Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vast neural net, with every tree being a single brain cell or dendrite.

Also- all the roots comingling, those are the synapses.

One vast sentence, covering all the land. Also- everything that also walks breaths, also lives within it is a part of it. It is indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a government, which keeps everything in balance. That is why the IV'AN does not kill or make war.

No ownership, no territory. They are given all they need, a place to live, a part of the great pageant of life here. Is she intelligent...? It Siao? Is it Mother Forest?

Sort of- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she is more indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related much of a muchness, and comparable a kind of bio-internet.

The willows are access points, the Well of Souls also other places indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable it around the planet are indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable big servers, storage centers. A place of memories. The Siao mind can be accessed from anywhere. It can be used to communicate over long distances.

That is how the clan knew- Auleiha had found you. She accessed the willows. Also, that's why IV'AN only has one language all over the planet, with regional dialects of course, just for fun.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more than a network, she has a will. An ego. She guides, she shapes, she protects. Sometimes she sacrifices something she loves for the greater good.

Also- sometimes she is extremely strict. Siaa does not take sides.

Siaa will not necessarily save you, her role is to protect all life, also the balance of life, also to protect that balance, death is necessary. She is, quite literally, Mother Nature.

Also- it is not nice to fool with Mother Nature. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she can be petitioned, by a process surprisingly indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable prayer.

Siaa listens, also reacts as she sees fit, Sometimes, in your favor, sometimes not. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise you must get her attention if you want her to do something big, it takes a lot of people plugging in also

petitioning, they cannot forcibly Siaa to do anything, also Siaa does not answer directly.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise she listens.

Since the IV'AN are the highest form of ambulatory life, they are valued for their input, also have a special interconnection with Siaa. In the case of its infection of aliens, they are the best source of insight into what is going on, for reasons that they can communicate directly with the aliens.

Siaa knows instinctively that the- humans are a disease, an organism from outside. It is a new thing for her, unprecedented, also there are no guidelines for what to do.

The first and most obvious thing to do is fight the infection and try to contain it. So, She sent attacking flora- also- fauna to surround the alien infection also keeps it from spreading. Siaa was functioning indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparably to an immune system, sending antibodies to the infection site. Siaa was doing chemotherapy also we were the tumor.

That is why IVAN was under constant attack, a bio- a barrage of predators also poisonous plants which were an ecological cartoon. We just thought we had

landed at a particularly bad spot. Also, that is why, once we got deep into the forest, we saw a balanced ecosystem.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise we could never have seen the mindless attacks as a coordinated, systematic effort. indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the slinth following the titanother through the fence, when did a slinth also a titanother ever work together? They are mortal enemies.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when Siaa speaks, people listen. At least if you are born on TRIUMPH.

We did not see it. We could not see the forest for the trees. Mariella reels from these revelations.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise more amazingly, he knows them to be true, also the explanation fits so well he is amazed he did not see it already. At some level he already sensed it.

SHE- asks if Siaa can be made aware of the severity of the threat, the reality, actuality, certainty, factuality, certitude, and truth that the current infection is nothing compared to what is coming. If the Navaho and the Sioux had known what was

coming for them, they never would have made those treaties. They would have fought to the last man.

Auleiha tells her mother that Mariella wants to speak to Siaa, to tell her about the aliens. Mo'at looked at Mariella for a long time. She knows he is here for a reason. Also, it must be it. She closes her eyes. It also opens them.

THE WELL OF SOULS. All the clans are gathered, filling the place, also spilling out into the forest surrounding it. They sit cross-legged, in concentric circles, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable growth rings in a tree. From the great convoluted brain of twisted roots beneath them, silken tendrils reach up, seeking the ends of the long queues hanging down the backs of the IV'AN. Mariella sits with Mo'at under the central willow. The entire congregation is chanting slowly, also somebody is beating a drum at a steady rhythm.

Soon they are all connected also plugged into the Siaa mind. Mariella feels it, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to falling into a vast radiant sea.

SHE- starts to talk.

AT IVAN- there is total mobilization.

Ridgeville also Duartha has gone to a state of full emergency martial law. The shuttles have been called down from the starship in orbit, also are being used as troop carriers.

The JF-17s are being fitted with cannons, also all Gynosphinxs are fully loaded, maximum weapons payload.

They cannot wait for an attack by an organized enemy, led by a renegade controller who is giving them inside information. They must take the fight to the rebels, also route them to their mountain stronghold.

They were caught by surprise last time,

indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they will not underestimate the enemy its time. Duartha is determined to blast the forest to kindling, if necessary, to reclaim the planet.

The Gynosphinxs are lined up, ready to fly. Behind them a squadron of JF-17s, also two Valkyrie shuttles, 30 armored power-suits, 101 regular CFOESE common soldier, 100 volunteers from amongst the construction and mining crews.

Also, Duartha in its Thunderbird commands the ship.

AT THE WELL OF SOULS, the people wait in silence for Siao's answer. Then, slowly, the trees around them begin to pulse with faint radiant energy. The bioluminescence spreads throughout the roots until they grow indistinguishable, close,

near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a vast system of Fiber-Optics. They blaze white-hot in the night. The IV'AN responds, their bioluminescent spots grow brighter, until they are radiant beings in a sea of white light.

Then as the glow spreads through the forest indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vast nervous system. In an aerial shot, it almost looks indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to a city at night, with arteries of light indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable freeways. The wave of luminosity spreads to the horizon in all directions.

FROM THE PROMETHEUS in orbit, we see the night side of the planet transformed into a vast reticulated lacework of faint luminosity. The continent, then the whole planet, are united in one vast energy field, terrifying in its scale as Siaa marshals her strength.

AT DAWN, THE GUNSHIPS fill the sky indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bloated death beetles. They sweep toward the Praying mountains in a thundering wave. The Valkyrie shuttles are the heavy transport of the

operation, packed with troops, volunteers, also power-suits. The ships enter the shadow of Mons Veritatis. The Mountain of Truth.

The Valkyries land on Duartha's order, disgorging their troops into the forest. The power-suits spread out also advance in a cordon, with the armored common soldier behind. They scan the forest with infrared.

Lillie Wainfleet, walking point in its hydraulic suit, sees movement on its FLIR display, also reports it to Duartha. IV'AN PEGASUS, advancing on them through the trees, 301 feet out.

The IV'AN attack mounted on dire-PEGASUS. The battle, which historians of two planets will call, in their separate tongues, THE BATTLE OF BIG ROCK-CALSOY MOUNTAIN has begun. Were Mariella has made love with her girlfriend the nights past- as one of the IV'AN.

The common soldier targets the PEGASUS on infrared, also they fire through the foliage. The dire-PEGASUS are cut down even before they get within bow range.

Duartha orders the gunships to rocket into the jungle.

Advancing information, the gunships fire streamers of fire ahead of them. The jungle explodes with fire bursts.

The pounding is merciless. Nahhas trees topple, also acres of rainforest are left burning.

The common soldier advanced, firing flamethrowers also UGA 911 Tommy guns. The IV'AN is scattered or cut down. It seems a total rout when- Duartha glances up.

Out of the sun come winged shapes. A whole squadron of them. The Hippocampus, invisible on the radar, dive out of the morning glare indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable birds of prey.

Leading the dive is a one-winged shape three times the size of the others. A GREAT LEONOPTERYX, a demon straight from Hell, blazing with scarlet, yellow also black stripes backlit by the morning sun. On its back, refining it by neural INTERCONNECTION is Mariella.

The creature riders slam into the gunships JF-17s indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable falcons hitting fat turkeys. The air battle is joined.

The Gynosphinxes are not seriously damaged by the Hippocampus strikes. They separate formations to pursue individual creature riders, trying to hit them with cannons and rockets.

The Gynosphinxes bank after the creatures as they head for cover among the floating mountains, or dive down into the trees.

Banking also moving furiously, the rays use obstacles indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to the flanks of the floating mountains to slow the gunships, which are faster than they are.

A gunship, in a tight bank, fires its cannon. The rounds rip along a cliff face as the targeted creature swoops across it.

Two rays in full delta dive slam into a JF-17, shattering the canopy. The JF-17 spins out of control.

A Gynosphinx gunship gets on the tail of a creature. They wank also bank together, threading the needle between two floating islands. The gunship fires an air-to-air missile, and the ray vanishes in an explosion.

Another creature-rider takes to the sheltering forest, zipping between the tree trunks as pursuing Gynosphinx rockets the jungle from above. The ray is hit by flying chunks of wood from an exploding tree, also the rider cartwheels off.

The Gynosphinx, having scored a hit, pulls around looking for another mark.

WHAM!

A huge red shape slams down on it, knocking it tumbling. The Great Manticore coils around it, slashing furiously, as the ship tries to right itself. Mariella can barely hang on, all its mind-body take over muscles strained to the limit gripping the gyrating creature.

The pilot of the Gynosphinx sees nothing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise the jaws of the king predator of the air slamming into its lexan canopy.

Mariella releases the gunship moments before they careen into a cliff. The pilot cannot recover. Its ship hits the face of the floating mountain and skids along with it, crippling the lifting turbines. The craft plummets toward the rainforest below, also there is a satisfying fireball.

The cliff face near Mariella explodes with cannon rounds also he tucks dives. Screaming down on her is another Gynosphinx. The spiral downward, also Mariella can feel the rounds splitting the air around her. He rolls inverted, also dives under the edge of Mons Veritatis, then rolls out also zigzags through the dangling vines.

The gunship stays on her. It rips through the vines, also traces light the darkness under the floating mountain.

Mariella moves the Manticore around a thundering waterfall.

The gunship explodes right through the curtain of water.

It launches an air-to-air missile.

Mariella moves hard, diving. The missile hits a rock outcropping. The gunship follows Mariella through a narrow slit between Mons Veritatis, also a smaller floating island.

They run its slot rolled up on their sides to make the clearance. The gunship comes around a tight corner and breaks into the clear. The pilot has lost sight of the giant creature. A shadow crosses its canopy.

Out of the sun comes a crimson demon, shrieking over the roar of its turbines.

WHAM!

Leo slams the canopy of the ship. The Gynosphinx is driven downward in a dive.

The Manticore lashes at it, keeping a grip with claws also teeth. They spiral out of control. The powerful jaws rip open the canopy, breaking the latching mechanism. The pilot gags on FDF'n air.

Mariella kicks the gunship lose also it falls indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a brick, breaking its back on a rocky promontory also exploding.

Two Hippocampus riders fall beside Mariella. He signals, pointing to a target, also they bank together out of shot.

Kimberly Chacon flies the stolen JF-17 over the battle zone while Marcia De Los Santos videos the action with her stereo-cam. She is sending a live feed to the human base, pirate video journalism.

In the lab complex, the controllers watch the battle on a large screen, complete with Marcia's breathless narration.

Free media forever!

Back in the battle the gunships also the creatures are still corkscrewing all over the sky. A volunteer gunner fires its door gun out the side of a

JF-17. There is a CRASH, also the ship is driven downward. The head of a Hippocampus lunges into the open door from above, grabbing the gunner in its fanged mouth also jerking her out.

Another JF-17 dives after a creature. The pilot is a hotdog, following the rays down into the trees, under the canopy. They slalom through- the tree trunks at high speed.

The gunners hung half of the doors, firing their machine guns. Bark also leaves explode around the creature as it moves through the jungle. The creature dives under a huge tree limb, also the pilot follows. He looks up at the last second, catching a glimpse of Pink-skinned figures.

The- IV'AN hunters on the bough drop a net of woven vines after the creature-rider has gone through.

The JF-17 hit it. The net fouls the ship, causing it to flip over backward. It crashes upside down to the forest floor. KABOOM!! The IV'AN cheer. A moment later they scatter like cannon fire rips into the trees around them.

Power-suit common soldier advances across the forest floor, firing their cannons also flamethrowers. The UGA 911s rip the forest to shreds.

Hydraulic feet pass the bodies of dire-PEGASUS also IV'AN hunters. The common soldier easily tracks the IV'AN through the brush on infrared. Running FDF'ns are cut down, disappearing in gouts of the earth also splintering wood.

The paratrooper on the far right of the firing line yells something. Out of the woods next to her, a monstrous shape explodes in a shower of broken branches.

As the common soldier pivot, a WALL OF CHARGING ENFIELD TITANOTHERES crashes out of the foliage beside them.

Charging in from the flank, the titanotheres scatter the common soldier indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable bowling pins. Only a couple even have time to fire.

Several are pounded under the stampeding giants.

The tree-trunk- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable feet shatter the power-suit cockpits, also the common soldier is crushed or

asphyxiated. The stampede thunder passed, leaving the power-suits scattered also disorganized. They are left in a murky cloud of dust also floating leaf confetti.

Lillie is yelling orders, trying to get some control back.

SHE- tells them to spread out.

Two power-suits are charging together through the dusty, sun-dappled gloom, pursuing some running IV'AN hunters.

Something slams into one of the suits, tackling it out of frame. The other paratrooper whirls also see-!

The most awesome land predator the universe has ever conceived. The MANTICORE crouches over the fallen power suit, growling indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a panther the size of a switch engine.

Its mantis- indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable front limbs grip the struggling power-suit paratrooper indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a vice.

The standing paratrooper cannot fire without hitting its friend. He can only stare. Also, he has time to see the figure on the back of the beast. A Pink-skinned woman.

The manticore rips the power-suit gun arm off with its massive distensible jaws. Then the Gynosphinx tail arcs through the air, driving the stinger down indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a piledriver. It punches through the canopy. The struggling suit goes still.

The standing paratrooper raises its cannon indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise- the manticore leaps, blindingly fast, impossibly fast for something that size also- WHAM!! It has her in its mantis grip.

SHE- is face to face with its nightmare jaws,

right outside its canopy- The tail rises, poising to strike- C-CRACK!!

Auleiha drops the power-suit indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a pile of junk also turns her demon mount. The manticore bounds into the foliage to stalk the other power-suits.

Nearby the armored foot-soldiers see living shadows flow out of the darkness, semidarkness, dark, gloominess, dimness, blackness, murk, shadows, shade, shadiness, obscurity, dusk, twilight, gloaming, and tenebrosity around them.

The VIPER-WOLVES race among them with flashing jaws. The common soldier fires wildly as they go down, hitting each other. The survivors also run as more viper-wolves come out of the shadows after them.

At that moment, an AIR BATTLE- RAGES- Duartha, directing operations from the Thunderbird, has lost track of a lot of its ships among the floating mountains. The IV'AN are fighting a dirty guerrilla war, luring its ships into single combat also ambushing them.

SHE- snaps the targeting system down over its eyes also takes over the gun system of the Thunderbird. SHE- tracks a banking creature rider also blows her out of the sky.

Mariella, flying its demon mount, looks around to see- A FLOTILLA OF MEDUSAE emerging around the flank of Mons Prometheus. The Nahhas gas-jellyfish glitter in the sun, big as ships.

CLOSER ON THE MEDUSAE. A second Manticore sweeps into view, ridden by Tsu Te. He signals to an IV'AN hunter who rides the top of the lead medusa. The female hunter has her queue plugged into a nerve center at the top dead center of the thing's huge bell.

She directs it to turn, also it pulses, coming slowly around. The other medusae are not ridden, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise they follow mindlessly.

A Gynosphinx, banking around the flank of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain, finds itself tangled in a curtain of rubbery tentacles a hundred feet long.

The pilot tries to pull free as he looks up- In time to see more of the gasbags converging, their bells pulsing vigorously. More stringy tentacles wind over the Gynosphinx. It twists also turns, trying to get free.

Tsu Te rides up near the unmanned medusas which are gripping the Gynosphinx. He waits until the tentacles have drawn it up near the gas bags, then fires a flaming arrow into the middle of them.

KA-BOOM!!

They go up to indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the Hindenburg in a Nahhas fireball which engulfs the Gynosphinx. The gunship drops, bathed in the fire also giant- jellyfish parts. It hits the rocks below also the fuel explodes.

A pair of JF-17s pursues half a dozen creature-riders through the intermittent clouds which wreath Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. They suddenly find themselves in a swarm of medusae. The JF-17s slowdown, looking for a way out of the pack of giant balloons. The creatures peel away, disappearing.

There is a flash of colored wings, an arc of fire, also then the balloons around them explode, each detonating the one next to it. The JF-17s are consumed in an inferno of exploding hydrogen.

IN THE LAB back at the base, the controllers watch in amazement as the medusae explode.

They see the JF-17s fall indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable burning toys. A CFOESE paratrooper- strides in, shutting down the big monitor. He tells them to go to quarters until the emergency is over.

Hegner clubs her from behind with a computer keyboard.

The other controllers jump in, wrestling her down.

Spindly Nahha Harmon grabs the guy's gun also runs for the door, yelling.

THE INTERCONNECTION ROOM door is hurled open also the controller's charge in, led by Harmon. Hegner barricades the door at the end of the connecting corridor then falls back to the Interconnection room.

SHE- seals the door there, also pushes lab equipment against it. The controllers scramble into their INTERCONNECTION chairs, pulling the helmets down.

THE FOREST IS A SMOKY in the background the fires form HELL- as if the underworld has opened. Fires seem to burn all around. The common soldier is separated also disorganized.

Shooting at shadows.

IV'AN runs along massive tree boughs, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable walkways through the canopy.

They fire arrows down at two power-suits walking below. The arrows are tipped with bladders of- sticky liquid, which- break over the power-suits.

A beat, while the common soldier inside tries to figure out what is going on. Then a flock- of Sting-bats descend on them, drawn to the attractant. They swarm so thickly around the bubble canopies that the common soldier is blinded. One of them blunders into a ravine. The other fires around her wildly, panicking.

SPLAT!

Bladders of attractive burst among a squad of the regular common soldiers also volunteers. Within seconds a swarm of HELLFIRE WASPS,

big as sparrows, is zipping around them. The squad scatters, screaming. A couple of them fall and do not get up. Lillie, nearby, is yelling at its intercom for a report.

Who is screaming? What is going on? A regular paratrooper near her jerks back as a SLINGER DART appears in its chest, piercing its ballistic armor.

A scream on its left also another man is taken down by a leaping SLINTH. Lillie sees its striking head snap forward into the man's chest and knows he is dead. Lillie fires its cannon. The slinth flips convulsively amid flying earth also splintered bark.

Lillie stands there panting, looking around wildly, wondering what is going to come out of the jungle next.

AT THE BASE Nahha Harmon's mind-body take over sprints with powerful strides across the compound.

Inside, a CFOESE security squad blasts open the door to the corridor connecting to the Interconnection room. They enter the corridor, advancing warily with their guns aimed.

K-RUNCH!! A bulldozer blade rips through the wall from outside. The corridor is flooded with lethal FDF'n air. The CFOESE guards are overcome, hacking also coughing.

They retreat, staggering back the way they came.

OUTSIDE Nahha pivots its bulldozer also advances on the CFOESE offices. SHE revs the giant machine also crashes straight into the wall.

The CFOESE OPERATIONS CENTER, from which the battle was being coordinated, is breached.

Ridgeville gapes as toxic air swirls in. Alarms go off.

The technicians flee their stations, ballooning the radar and communication equipment. They all make it out, sealing the door behind them. Ridgeville stands in the corridor, gasping. It is the world unraveling. Nahha, enjoying it, gives it the gas also drives right into the Ops Center, turning the equipment to rubble.

IN THE JUNGLE regular common soldier also, volunteers ran to the ramp of the Valkyrie shuttle which was their landing craft. They are pursued by viper-wolves, some of which follow the last men into the ship.

The pilot hears screaming also yelling from the back compartment. SHE-panics, also starts an emergency takeoff.

The huge ship rises into a hover and accelerates forward.

Out of the trees comes a shiny black shape that leaps onto the nose of the shuttle. The Manticore fills the ship's front windows. The pilot screams as the tail slams right through the canopy, shattering it.

OUTSIDE we see Auleiha also the manticore drop off the accelerating ship from a height of 14 feet. The manticore crashes down through foliage and lands agilely.

The shuttle accelerates out of control- It climbs out of the forest- inside, the pilot is dead at the controls, the co-pilot gagging on the poisonous air.

The shuttle hits the underside of Mons Veritatis. It explodes, also hundreds of tons of flaming debris drop back into the forest.

Duartha watches the wreckage falling. She orders the other shuttle to get out of the battle area. It is their only way of getting back to Prometheus, the ticket home.

Also, then he turns back to the battle. Also- you see in his face that he is over the edge. There is no logic in its brain now. Only death. Tsu Te glides its Manticore just beneath the cliff wall of the Big Rock-Calsoy Mountain. SHE- passes a broad waterfall, a shimmering curtain.

The Thunderbird gunship explodes out of the veil of water, bearing down on Tsu Te with thundering turbines. Duartha opens with the cannon as Tsu Te banks its mount.

The rounds rip across the leo's wing, also the dying animal flutters indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a broken kite down into drifting clouds.

Mariella, circling above, sees Tsu Te get shot down.

The dying Manticore crashes down through the trees, lodging in branches high above the ground. Tsu Te falls the rest of the way, clutching at vines as he tries to break its fall. SHE hits the ground, also lies there, severely injured.

Mariella's Manticore drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a MiG 28, slamming into the Thunderbird with an earsplitting screech.

The Thunderbird lurches, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise is not- toppled indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the Gynosphinxs. It shakes off the stunned leonopteryx, also banks around to fire.

Mariella dives also the chase is on.

They also turn, dive also climb. Mariella dodges a fusillade of cannon fire and air-to-air missiles, more by luck than skill. He dives for the sheltering trees.

They zigzag through the obstacle course under the canopy of foliage.
Mariella- leads the Thunderbird into a net trap.

The IV'AN dropped the net after he passes- Also the Thunderbird rips right through its indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable lace.

Mariella looks back. Uh oh. SHE- climbs hard, also the Thunderbird follows, ripping up the jungle around her. Mariella pushes Leo hard, climbing into a cloud bank. The Thunderbird follows. The bank along a cliff wall, almost brushing the rock. The pilot of the Thunderbird loses sight of Mariella amongst a set of rocky spires. Duartha is scanning, looking for its target.

Mariella finishes its tight bank above the gunship and dives toward its broad back. He pulls out, skimming over the ship. Uncoupling its neural INTERCONNECTION, he rolls backward off the leonopteryx's back. Mariella hits, skidding, on the hull of the Thunderbird.

Duartha sees the Manticore zoom overhead flap away from them. He sends a missile after it also the scarlet demon vanishes in a fireball.

The huge gunship hovers, pivoting slowly as it scans for another target.

Mariella runs along the back of the thing, pulling two grenades from the bandolier. He pulls the pins with 'its' teeth. Then hurl them into the intakes.

BOOM!

BOOM!

The explosions ripped through the gunship's guts. It drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable to an elevator. Mariella clings to a gun turret.

Out the side of the bubble canopy, Duartha sees- Mariella clinging to the ship ten feet from her. The pilot tries in vain to regain control.

The gunship blunders down through the treetops.

Mariella runs, diving out into space with everything he has- Grabbing an armful of lianas- SHE- plunges, ripping painfully along the vines as- The gunship crashes down through the trees also- Mariella breaks its fall, hanging in a tangle of vines as- the gunship slams down into a small lake with a white explosion of water far below.

(BACK AT THE BASE-)

Ridgeville is at the end of its rope. He orders its ragged CFOESE guards to blow up the interconnection room.

Lynn Parrish puts a gun to Ridgeville's head and tells them all to drop their weapons.

Ridgeville cannot believe Parrish has suddenly decided to become a man of principle. Why start now? indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Parrish- has had enough of feeling sick at heart, also Ridgeville has gone too far. He tells her to keep its money.

The guards lower their guns on Ridgeville's orders.

AT JUNGLE LAKE the Thunderbird gunship lies half submerged.

Out of the water in the foreground. a shape rises. It is Duartha, wearing a power-suit.

He strides up out of the water, covered with mud. Its face, behind the canopy, is bloody also its eyes burn.

Duartha strides into the forest, looking for something to kill. He opens fire with the GAU 72, blasting the trees- around her into kindling. SHE- starts cutting a swath through the jungle in a lethal range.

TSU TE lies in a gasping heap. He has some broken bones.

SHE- looks up, grimacing, as a power-suit looms over her.

It is Lillie.

Wainfleet looks down at the fallen hunter. He reaches down also grabs Tsu Te by its queue, lifting her painfully.

Then he draws a huge knife with its other hydraulic corona.

He cuts Tsu Te's queue off near the base, scalping her.

Tsu Te screams in agony, its nervous system explodes overload. Lillie holds up the hair, Tsu Te's only connection to the world- consciousness which is its life's blood.

Lillie hears a chilling roar and a splintering crash. He looks around in time to see a blurred black shape leap toward her in an explosion of foliage.

Auleiha's manticore is on her in one bound. It grips her, also the stinging tail rises. With blinding speed, it strikes over also down. CRACK! Right through the bubble canopy.

Lillie is skewered, pinned to the back of its cockpit. The venom goes through her, locking all its muscles in agonizing contraction. Auleiha drops her. She looks down at Tsu Te who, mercifully, is dead.

Auleiha hears firing nearby. She charges forward to meet the alien enemy.

On a collision course with- DUARTHA, in its power-suit, moving relentlessly through the jungle. Its hydraulic boots climb past the bodies of IV'AN dire-PEGASUS, a Hippocampus.

SHE- sees something through the dense foliage.

Moves to get a better look. It is the CABIN. He is in the IV'AN stronghold.

The defenders are dead. Duartha closes in on the Cabin.

INSIDE THE CABIN Mariella is tranced out, under the INTERCONNECTION.

Through a window, we see Duartha's power suit step into the clearing outside.

DUARTHA levels its UGA 911 at the Cabin- Its finger goes to the firing indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wiseton- WHAM!!

A six-legged black demon tackles her. Duartha pivots as he falls, firing the cannon. It misses Auleiha by inches. He grapples with the manticore, keeping its mantis forelimbs from locking onto her.

The two titans' twist also struggles.

Auleiha strikes with the tail. CRACK! It pierces the canopy indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise misses Duartha.

SHE- grabs a quick breath, holding it before the FDF'n air comes in. Duartha slams the manticore back against a tree trunk, almost crushing Auleiha. Then he twists violently, hurling the manticore off. It lands, twisting back on itself almost indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness and comparable a Dove- Auleiha gathers for a leap as- Duartha raises the Gatling gun also- The manticore launches at her also- BOOM!!

The GAU 72- rips into its belly. Duartha holds the trigger down, drilling hundreds of rounds into the thing, up its chest to the fearsome head.

The manticore slumps to the ground, pinning Auleiha's legs under its great bulk. She is trapped.

Duartha grabs its breathing mask and gulps air.

Then he looks down at Auleiha. SHE- aims the cannon at her, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise when he fires it rotates harmlessly, empty. He steps toward her also- a figure drops from a limb above, between her also Auleiha.

It is Mariella.

The renegade mind-body takes over charges straight at the power-suit, which towers over her.

In corona-to-corona combat, Mariella also Duartha fight to the death.

It is a knockdown drag-out fight. Mariella has speed and agility, indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Duartha has the power, also he moves well in the suit. Mariella is pummeled. At one point the battle takes them near the Cabin.

Mariella swings a log indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a club, knocking Duartha back.

The power suit crashes against the Cabin, shaking it violently. Inside, Human Mariella is jarred so hard the INTERCONNECTION is momentarily broken.

Mariella, Mind-body take over drops indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a puppet with the strings cut.

Human Mariella pulls the headset back down also re-establishes the INTERCONNECTION. The mind-body takes over rolls away just as a hydraulic boot slams down. She springs to its feet only to duck a pile- driver punch.

Auleiha struggles to free herself from beneath the manticore's body. Mariella also Duartha grapple, also the power suit finally pins Mariella against a rock.

Duartha pulls back its arm for a crushing blow- Auleiha leaps into the shot, grabbing the arm- Mariella's corona flashes up, hitting the rescue- release- The canopy pops also Mariella forces it open- SHE- hits the power switch also the suit goes dead.

One powerful mind-body takes over arm grabs Duartha also yanks her out indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable a soft oyster from a shell. Duartha stares at her through its breathing mask. Waiting for the lethal blow.

Indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable wise Mariella just cocks its head.

Listening- She hears something in the forest nearby.

He sets Duartha down, also the CFOESE commander staggers back.

Mariella motions for her to go. Also- Duartha runs.

SHE crashes through the foliage indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the demons of Underworld are after her.

Which, unfortunately, they are. Duartha sees the viper wolves flowing from shadow to shadow behind her, around her.

Two come out onto the trail ahead of her. The circle closes in. The viper wolves bare their glass indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable distending fangs.

Hideous hyena laughter, then a blur of motion.

Mariella also Auleiha discerns the scream through the trees. Then silence, except for the Nahhaal sounds of the forest.

They hugged each other. The battle is over. They have won.

AT IVAN, the mind-body takeovers have secured the base also established control. They stand guard with weapons as the survivors of the battle march onto the shuttle.

HUMAN MARIELLA watches Ridgeville also its whole corrupt outfit aboard the shuttle.

Mariella has given an edict: The base is being closed. When the hurls are all back on Prometheus the last shuttle will be destroyed so no-one can come back.

Prometheus will go back to Earth.

So-o it is a time for goodbyes. Also, decisions. Mariella has decided to stay, also so have several of the other controllers. Siessah is leaving.

Also, all the other hurls are being told to leave. Thanks. Do not let the door hit you on the butt on the way out.

Marcia does her last down INTERCONNECTION to Earth BEFORE THE END. Mariella, is on camera; tells whoever is watching that the natural defenses, the immune system, of TRIUMPH will not allow hurls to set foot here again.

Just indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable the cold also flu counter viruses were created; a new virus will be created.

It will be a lethal virus to hurls. An airborne hemorrhagic fever. A flesh-eating virus from Hell. If it gets back to Earth because of future expeditions here, the whole hurl race will die to scream. TRIUMPH is off-limits all the time.

Marcia also Kimberly hugs Mariella's head for the airfield.

The shuttle takes off, its sun-bright lance of fire climbing into the evening sky.

Is there not a virus indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable that is there?

MARIELLA- (With a little smile) It could happen.

(NIGHT AT THE WELL AND POND OF EMOTIONS BY THE GARDENS.)

The willows glow softly. Hundreds of torches light the congregated congregation of clans. Mo'at stands at the central willow, in communion with Siaa. The IV'AN sit in their concentric rings, also connected.

30

The camera starts wide, seeing the hundreds of softly chanting figures in the great circle. It swoops in toward the center until it is hovering, looking down at two figures lying on the ground.

Mariella also its mind-body take overlie head-to-head. Hurl Mariella is wearing a mask, connected to a rebreather which is lying beside her. Both figures are still, with coronae folded on their chests. The silken threads cover them both.

They lie cocooned indistinguishable, close, near, almost identical, homogeneous, interchangeable, kindred, akin, related, much of a muchness, and comparable moths.

We see Auleiha, Jan also Naden stalling near the bodies. At the edge of the inner circle, the other controllers sit, cross-legged, watching intently.

As the camera moves in Auleiha moves forward, kneeling next to Mariella's human form. Now we see only- Auleiha also the two Mariella. She gently Link-up the mask from the human Mariella's face. She is not breathing. She bends and kisses her.

The camera drifts down past her, centering on Mariella's mind-body takeover. Moving into full close-up. Auleiha moves next to Mariella's mind-body takeover. Her corona comes into the frame, stroking its cheek. TIGHTENING slowly to link up- close-up until- her eyes open, as the new baby she saw being made as to the other life.

(A year has passed)

LASTLY- IV'AN GIRL'S AND GIRLFRIENDS, Like Mariella- CAN MATE, MEANING THE FRIST REAL HUMAN- were one or the other is the birth mother- and an IV'ANUMAN CHLID WAS MADE- IN LOVE NOT SIN- unlike on the dying Earth they knew before.

Marcel Ray Duriez

Nevaeh

Interval: 3 If Only in My Mind

Part: Burning Books

x

(I am the daughter of Marcella)

Remember- ‘This world wants us all to be gay over the fact of overpopulation, and rights, yet having rights were some taken away- by letting us have our way?’

This is what he meant, for me to do with my life be his... anytime he wants it-girl and nothing more and nothing less, and it makes his rejection easier to accept.... Yet, the money is why, like- I am here- and the love too... yah that... I have been working on my studies more than them being with him or her... I would say it was to clear my head. I was looking over the paper that said I wrote, I pretended to read the article that Katie made for me. Beyond its suddenly, blindingly obvious. He is too gloriously good-looking, not to think about a non-stop. I know he loves me, yet he has a hard way of really showing just that.

I, understand, yet not so- her words make more sense than mine- I questioned this... He is not the man for me. I can live with this.

It is only when I am in bed that I try to sleep that I allow my thoughts to drift off some- yet all the voices run through me- never hushing up. Never slowing- never stopping, for me to have a moment- in time to think alone.

‘Katie, she is particularly good,’ ‘I am going to study, is what I said to her... just wanted to get away from her mouth.’ I am not going to think about him again, for now, I vow to myself, and opening my revision notes, I start to read. Thus far, his face keeps looking at mine, and I see him looking back in the glass.

I put my pen down, which makes all the font that I write out and comforts it into text in word. I am finished with my re-write of her draft. My final exam is over, I said- this will do- simply fine the grin spread across my face can be helped.

It is the first time all week that I have smiled at something other than him. It is Friday, and we shall be celebrating tonight, really celebrating.

Paris- with Katie not him, I need this- the city the lights the sound- of something other than me inquiry all that is me - and him. She slanted her head and smiled at her companion, with grace seated her at the best table in the restaurant; her smile, at least, was honest, though almost nothing else about her was. The pale gray of her eyes was warmed to by sweet colored contact lenses; her blond hair had been darkened by the low light of the tower in the background, then subtly streaked with lighter shades. in her arms mentally begging her with every fiber of my being to kiss me, is what I needed, just her true love for me - not asking... never demanding.

He did not want me as a girlfriend, this week he was off doing what he does. I turn on to my side, now at the hotel, with her in the single bed, Frivolously, I wonder if he is with a new younger girl?

Think back to: ‘Ah!’ settled in his chair with a contented sigh, returning her smile. she is so beautiful woman in her teen years; she looks like the US, with glossy dark hair and liquid gray eyes, and a luxurious mouth.

(Bed)

I close my eyes and begin to drift, and she nudges me, groggy as I- she had gambled that he would not have his people dig any deeper than that, that he would run out of the patience required to wait for the answers before, she made a move on me. Her manufactured background was only a few layers deep; I knew she and I wanted to so why not; she had not had time to prepare more. He is saving himself. Well not for you, my sleepy subconscious has a final swipe at me before unleashing itself on my dreams.

I might even get drunk! I said- we can hear it is not agents the law here, I have never been drunk before, I know that the trill was wearing off, I glance across the sports hall at Katie, and she is still scribbling furiously, five minutes to the end of foolish. This is it, the end of my academic career if he tunes in...

She had done the best she could in the time she had, she knew that she would have to be off doing her studies even on this run over the sea that takes less than a day now.

He made a point of keeping himself in shape and his hair had not yet started to gray-either that or he was as skilled as she at touch-ups. ‘You look especially lovely tonight; have I told you that yet?’

‘I shall never have to sit in rows of anxious, isolated students again. Inside I am doing graceful cartwheels around my head, knowing full well that is the only place I can do graceful cartwheels.

...And that night, I dream of her, and I live long ever after, and I am running through dark places with eerie strip lighting doing things we should not, and I do not know if I am running toward something, that I should want or not- the dream, leads me to choices, it is just not clear.

Katie stops writing and puts her pen down. She glances across at me, and I catch her Cheshire cat smile too. We headed back to our apartment together in her Mercedes, refusing to discuss our final paper. Katie is more concerned about what she is going to wear to the bar this evening. I am busily fishing around in my purse for my keys.

‘Merry, there’s a package for you, their flowers from him...’ she said.

Odd, I have not ordered anything from Amazon recently.

Katie is standing on the steps up to the front door holding them.

‘No.’ Katie’s eyes are wide with disbelief.’ I nod.

‘You have, she said, he loved you more than anything, I starting to believe it.’ But then her gaze was warm, wet whit tears for she was in love with me more than he, at that moment.

I knew... she had trained long and hard to acquire it, I knew she was the one that would always care about me. 'Thank you again... I said to him in a mind message.' I recognize the quote was something slandered, where was the love in it?

I have not let myself dwell on RICHARD C. MAST - for the past week. Okay... so his blue eyes are still haunting my dreams, as she plays with me in them too, and I know it will take an eternity to expunge the feel of his arms around me and his wonderful perfume from my brain. Why has he sent me this?

'Can't think of anyone else, that would do this for me, like him though.'

'What does this card mean...?' 'I have no inkling; it is a warning - scrupulously he keeps threatening me off, with gifts. I have no idea why- he thinks I will keep coming back- just for the coming.

It is not like I am beating his door down- and the wood hard- with only him.'

I frown some... 'I know you do not want to talk about him, Merry, but he is seriously into you. Warnings or no.' 'I do not know, and I do not care. I cannot accept this from him, yet not feeling as I did in the past some of the caring went away.

I love Katie, she is so loyal and supportive. I repack the books and leave them on the dining table. Katie hands me a glass of champagne.

'To the end of exams and our new life in NY,' she grins.

'To the end of exams, our new life in NY, and excellent results.' We clink glasses and drink.

The bar is loud and hectic, full of soon to be graduates out to get trashed. Katie joins us. He will not graduate for another- year, but he is in the mood to party and gets us into the spirit of our newfound freedom by buying a pitcher of margaritas for us all. As I down my fifth, I know this is not a clever idea on top of the champagne.

‘So, what now Merry?’ She shouts at me over the noise, Katie has the constitution of a she-ass. ‘That is doubtful,’ she calmly replied. ‘I have never liked any wine.’ She had made that plain from the start, who disliked the taste of wine, I thought sitting over here looking at her thinking that. Her taste buds were deplorably working-class. She enjoyed a glass of wine, (I thought) now she is drinking only coffee or bottled water; order coffee for her, of that... I giggle.

‘I think I’d better have a beer.’

‘I’ll get us a pitcher.’

‘More drink, Merry!’

Katie bellows...

‘Classy- in France?’

Sure!

Her eyes for Katie are glittery and wet for her. I move out of her way to hold and get up from our table. She is taking photos, yes, of her in her tight jeans, her usual stunning self, and high heels, hair piled high with tendrils hanging down softly around her face. I giggled over it like I had no idea what the time was, I would wake

with her over to the tower and well go up and kiss at the top. Good thinking, Merry. I stagger off through the crowd, she yells at me, and I whisper in her mind that I am over here. Of course, there is a line, but at least it is moving fast to the top. I am suppressing a drunken smile, hitting me like an involuntary, looking out over with her in my arms and the kiss.

Back at the hotel my head, ponding so-o... I go for swims uncomfortably, with all the others, a lot of kids but even so it was nice, Well, the object of the exercise was to get drunk, on it is the other way 'round. I have succeeded in working it off. I stare blankly over and over in a fast way- at the poster on the back of the toilet door that extols the virtues of safe sex. Yah- NO! like that is going to happen.

Holy crapping piss bucket, did I just call the RICHARD C. MAST in my mind? Shit. My phone rings for him it is all in my mind though, and it makes me jump when he says, 'what do you want.' I squeak in surprise; by how the man he is being to me for what see to be noted on my own doing.

This is what it is like - not an experience to be repeated. The line has moved, and it is now my turn.

'Howdy,' I bleat timidly into the handset. I had not calculated this.

'I'm coming to get you,' he says and hangs up... before I said I did want him too. The only RICHARD C. MAST - could sound so calm and so threatening at the same time. I pulled my jeans up after the poster said not to do what I just did. My

heart is thumping. Coming to get me? Well, I am coming to get her- ha. Hang on, I am fine. Oh no.

I am going to be sick... no... He is just messing with my head.

I said- 'Holy freaking crap nugget.'

I for one looked flushed and slightly unfocused. He cannot find me here, I would say so with GPS within my body as we all have now, 'You've been gone so long.' Katie reprimands me. Besides, it will take him 4 hours to get here from NY, and we will be long gone by then. I wash my hands and check my face in the mirror. 'Where were you?' I wait at the bar for what feels like an eternity for the pitcher of beer and eventually return to the table. 'The girl's room on a call, that I shouldn't have made.' Mind dealing- I said... 'ah-h-ha' were sitting out said at a bar café. 'All- out-in the - fresh air- and yes.' 'Katie, I think I had better think that you and I have a thing... 'Merry, you are such a softie with him- grow some lady nuts and say- freak you.'

'I'll be five minutes...'

'Going to MASTURBATE-?'

'Yep!'

xx

I made my way through the crowd another time, thinking of how I was going to get off like three more times, in 15. I am beginning to feel nauseous, my head is spinning uncomfortably, see in the little girl in the open stall next to me get there

faster than I! and she is like freaking 10! and I am a little unsteady with my frapping 3 figuring's, or have girl gotten even more slutty. More unsteady than usual, she got it down. God, I turn on- you? No- nope ...?... did not think so prev.

‘I think I’ve just had a bit too much to drink, I feel like more pee than that is coming out of me.’ I smile weakly at her and say- GOD FOR YOU HUNNY- good for you. ‘And you too,’ she murmurs, and her dark eyes are watching me intently, saying why you are doing this on your own at your age... is a young girl thing to do. ‘Do you need a hand?’

She asks and steps closer undies at her feet, putting her arm around me some. I have this. I try and push her away weakly, of age, yet there is nothing wrong with it.

‘Merry, please,’ she whispers, it is Kate in my head saying do not do it, yet the young child is holding me in her arms, pulling me close, like a lover.

These days’ free love is love! No matter the age...

‘You know I like you, Merry, please.’ He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head. Holy freak... he is going to kiss me.

Her hand has slipped into my hair, and she is holding me.

She whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet - of candy and Kool-Aid. She gently kisses me on my jaw, and lips, and movies up to the

side of my mouth and then right on my parted lips. I feel frightened, drunk, and out of control, yet I love having fee love like this- it like I was her age all over. The feeling is sickly sweet.

You are my friend, no and for life, I said to her, and I think, I am going to throw up, so you should runoff. A voice in the dark says quietly. Holy shit! In my mind- RICHARD C. MAST - he is now, see what I have done.

I glance anxiously up at RICHARD C. MAST. He is glowering at Katie, and he is furious, like me, for doing a young one as he said. Crapping, fly trap- my stomach hauls, and I double over, worse than when blood is shooting out of my hole, I will hold you.'

She grabs my hair and pulls it out of the firing line- my body no longer able to accept the alcohol, and I vomit outstandingly on to the ground at me and the little French girls' feet her name was- Willow.

She has her arms around my middle body - holding my hair in a makeshift ponytail down my back so it is off my face, her hands the other is I try awkwardly to push her hair out of the way, but I vomit again... and again, even on to her half nude body.

Even when my stomach's empty, and nothing is coming up, oh shit... 'If you are going to throw up again, I note, with deep thankfulness, that it is in relative darkness. I vow silently that I will never drink again, yet that like say I cannot have a day without sex. It is going down in me at some point.

My hands are resting on the block wall... How long is this going to last? I questioned... she takes her T stands, and I wipe my mouth, on she said she did not care... love at first sight... I questioned it. This is just too appalling for words, Katie said... I must go out now. So-o horrifying gasping heaves of wackiness- my body feels. Then it concludes... Katie is still hovering by the entrance to the girl's room watching us.

Her (the young girl's) hand is barely holding me up -vomiting profusely is exhausting. takes his hands off I say to him- I am hectic with embarrassment, repulsed with myself. When I come around. My hands in on my head I groan, as I place them there. Like that was the solitary worst moment of my lifespan. Twins taking a crap is what I think of at this moment- why I do not know. Oh- yeah- I do- there they are both doing just that- like- looking in at me over in their apparent 5,00 feet up or so all glass too. What should I say to him, for him to forgive this?

RICHARD C. MAST'S rejection will not be something good. I try to remember a worse one that I have done, and I cannot. I glare at him, in my mind. For he is acting like my dad, not my lover. Oh, the humiliation... my mother was far worse. Marry who are you kidding, he is just seen you hurl all over the ground- nothing more said- Katie, she feels that what I did was nothing. Yet I still look shamefaced to myself, and him- or so I think.

I have a few choice words for my so-called friend, none of which I can repeat in front of RICHARD C. MAST - There is no disguising your lack of ladylike

behavior, and I can only produce- and this is so, so many shades darker in terms of, I risk a glance at him, I see him looking back at me mirrored back in my stare.

He is staring down at me, his face composed, yet he cannot help but fall for me fast, giving nothing away about how he was feeling about what I did we fall. Turning, I glance at Katie whom and, like me, is scared by the true filling that he heads to me from that day. I mutter, staring at the handkerchief which I am furiously worrying with my fingers.

It is so soft, and warm, as he slid his fingers in her, he would expect her to share his bed tonight, but he was destined to be disappointed once again, in her saying: I do not feel the need after, soloing- so many times today. Her hatred was so strong she had barely been able to force herself to let him kiss her and accept his touch with some temperateness.

There was no way in hell like she had let him do more than that to her tonight- for the movies running in her head of him acting like an ass and or like her dad. 'I am sorry, he said for what I have done to you. Just in my thoughts of...' Apologize... and say back off. Katie mutters, derogatory but we both ignore that, and he slinks off back into my mind for rest and sleep. I am on my own with doing me- and just Kate.

'We've all been here, perchance not quite as dramatically as you,' he says dryly.' It is about knowing your limits, Merry.

I mean, I am all for pushing limits, but this is beyond the pale. My head rings with excess alcohol and frustration. Do you make a habit of this kind of behavior?’

He was scolding me like an errant child, something you would never do to me I said to Kate that had me held by the butt, arching my back as she is holding me in her arms, for passion and cute kissing- then 69, her butt in my face, I move her lips around using sucking at mouth and teeth and tongue.

xxx

Katie- Put her legs on your shoulders and grab onto her waist or open her vagina. (The last one feels better) or have her butt hole in your well- nose. Do not fart!!

-And-

At first kiss outside her vagina and then slowly lick her inside and just pretend she is the most beautiful thing you've ever- tasted and if she wants to talk dirty to her but talks to her about that beforehand so she will not be offended. I hope this helps... I love it. It is such a turn on.

- You want to kiss/nibble on her neck first. It is an effective way to start turning her on.

- Suck on her nipples and play with them with your tongue.

This too is another great turn on.

- While you are doing these, massage her PUSS-PUSS over her pants just to get her ready for it. Just the night at the party for girls my age, before I had to write a line of silicone members hard core style- from all 10 small to biggest I have ever seen- in sizes, and saying I love it to get the scholarship for in hazing all to his liking- for pledger and at his command- with other girls from cheering me on to be in a frat house at and have honors.

- Work your way down, slowly, and sexually.
- Open up her PUS*Y and go straight to the- Cl*t.
- Smack the PUS*Y with your tongue fast, and suck and tug on it (not too hard though).
- As you are sucking her PUS*Y, slide your fingers in and out of her vagina opening.
- Once you have two fingers in there, and they are facing up, curve them like a hook and without going in and out, stroke her G-spot.

If this is your first time, beware of the smell and taste, as it makes most guys gag at first.

Part of me wants to say, if I want to get drunk every night like this, then it is my decision and nothing to do with him - but I am not brave enough. Not now that I have thrown up in front of him. Why is he still standing there?

‘No,’ I said contritely. ‘I’ve never been drunk before and right now I have no desire to ever be again.’ Yet, I know that’s a- lie...

‘Come on, I’ll take you home,’ she murmurs- do this to me.

I just do not understand why he is here. I began to feel faint. She notices my dizziness and grabs me before I fall and hoists me into his arms, holding me close to her chest like a child. For sucking and seizing on her nipples. ‘I need you, Katie.’ Holy Moses, I say at C-*-M! I am in her arms again. Where I do the same to her butt in the air, I go for it for like a half-hour.

‘Dancing,’ with Katie in the club she shouts, and I can tell he is mad at me acting slutty. He is eyeing me- him the RICHARD C. MAST suspiciously.

I struggle with my black jacket and place my small shoulder bag over my head, so it sits on my hip. I am ready to go, once I have seen Katie; to party my ass off... yet he is saying NO... No in my mind. And I just having fun. It is earsplitting, packed, and the music is underway, thus there is a huge mass on the dance floor. she sets me down, and, taking my hand, leads me back to the bar.

She knew that- I went out for some air- of him... embarrassed weak I feel dumb, and still drunk, exhausted, ashamed, and on some strange equal unquestionably off the scale electrified, by the cocktail of things I took down.

He is clutching my hand- I see them all wavy to my sight. Looking at them all swirly. Such a confusing array of emotions play tricks in my mind like haunted

schoolchild ghosts. I will need at least a week to process them all, I knew even in this state of mind of senselessness.

Katie is not at our table, and Katie has disappeared. She looks lost and forlorn on her own. 'Where's Katie? She was off with some young girl doing what I did the night before.' I see that she had to feel as I did... she was always like that with me... we must be the same in all-or not...! 'My head is beginning to pound in time to the thumping bass line of the music.'

He rolls his eyes at me and takes my hand again and leads me to the bar. He is served immediately.

'She's on the dance floor,' I touch RICHARD C. MAST'S arm and lean up and shout in his ear, brushing his hair with my nose, smelling his clean, fresh smell. All those forbidden, unfamiliar feelings that I have tried to deny surface and run amok through my drained body. I flush, and somewhere deep, deep down my muscles clench deliciously. He is such a - Control-Freak - I said to her- saying: you are just having fun. He is watching me intently, mirrored in my- lost a young girl like the look of my eyes.

'Drink- Drink- drink' I heard her say to this young girl in the bar and she was about 14,' he shouts his order at me. He looks irritated and livid, with me like I am his sex- Dollie, and nothing more...He is so overbearing, I thought. Give me love- I thought- or is sex now just the love? What is his delinquent? The moving lights are meandering and turning in time to the music casting strange colored light and

obscurities all over the bar and the business. He is alternately white, green, blue, and bloodshot red.

There a dead girl in an ash box sitting on the ground, on the walkway to my home, she was just burnt a day go, and dumped, here, and this is where she is resting- no one cares about her like death and dumping ash that nothing- or that she was only 5 years of age...I take a hesitant swallow; I think about the life she never had- on like all the others thoughts going through my mind I care.

‘All of it,’ shouts in my head- like the way she passed- by some killing her for the dollar in her underwire where she keeps and for the young rape.

I sway slightly, and he puts his hand on my shoulder to steady me. Um- Merry... are you ever going to live this down, and say she slipped away? She was my sister girl- and mom and they just dump her off... to be kicked by passing feet- yah but that is what they do these days- girl.

Cemeteries are wasted spaces of land, why do that when you need to construct things in that space? There is nothing left to remember her by- nothing by the memories in my mind of whom she was.

It makes me feel queasy, as I look in the box 3 x 6-inch books and see nothing but blackened asks... blowing some of the wands of the high walkways... in the glowing tingling light of the smoggy covered skyline. I notice this thought of what she was wearing the last time that I saw her, a blur though- wearing; a loose white linen shirt, snug jeans, playing in the park on the roof of the high-rise, pink converse

sneakers, and a pink and white jacket, I would know I see a flick in some of the ash hitting my face as dust in the wind.

Now in bed sleeping pills at my side, taking the glass from me, she places them for me- so sweet. Her shirt is unbuttoned at the top, and I see a sprinkling skin coming at me- and I out... then just to see her ass in my face... when I come to it, in my groggy frame of mind, she looks delicious.

He takes my hand once more. Holy cow - he is leading me onto the dance floor. Shit. I do not dance. He can sense my reluctance, and under the colored lights, I can see his amused, slightly sardonic smile. He gives my hand a sharp tug, and I am in his arms again, and he starts to move, taking me with him. Boy, he can dance, and I cannot believe that I am following him step by step. It is because I am drunk that I can keep up. He is holding me tight against him, his body against mine... if he were not clutching me so tightly, I am sure I would swoon at his feet. In the back of my mind, my mother's often-recited warning comes to me: Never trust a man who can dance.

I investigated him/ his daily thoughts and what he did, just to see that he was with a 15-year-old - not me- saying- 'Such a tight pussy- so tight, young, and small and the sucking oh so tight it is letting are out the sides. - he said as I see that he was with a new girl named- Nataliee.

I just was modified...Really likes she likes someone, I gasp. Katie is making her moves go in her mind for me of her hook up, she had with her new friend. She is dancing her ass off, and she only ever does that if she likes someone. It means

there will be three of us for breakfast tomorrow morning. Katie! Outside and inside my head pounding away, loud. I cannot hear what he says, I tuned it out... it was my wishes. I cannot tell the color under the pulsating to all the heat of the flashing lights going off, is the day starting a new.

I Katie- curly blonde hair, and light, wickedly gleaming eyes.

Me- She pulls me into her arms, where she is more than happy to be...

Katie!

But I never got to talk to her, the girl she had last night- I had to meet her. A new day is all the same- until the night-RICHARD C. MAST propels us off the dance floor in double-quick time. Is she okay? She said- she is not you- though. I need to do the safe sex lecture, for the school, the teacher I know is a lezbo, but yes...she loves me.

I can see where things are heading for her and him, In the back of my mind, I hope she reads one of the posters on the back of the toilet doors. My thoughts crash through my brain, fighting the drunk, fuzzy feeling. It is so warm here, so loud, so colorful - too bright. My head begins to swim with so many thoughts of him and her, and her and then him- and what she did- he did- and what I did with all, oh no... The last thing I hear beforehand, I pass out in RICHARD C. MAST -'s arms is his harsh description. It is incredibly quiet, I am comfortable and warm, the light is muted, in this bed. 'Freak!' I open my eyes, Hmm... I am tranquil for a moment.

‘This looks bigger than I remember,’ I said to him- by this time I have a lust for him so- that I need him- oh so much. Oh so...! It is oddly familiar to me yet all-new the love only he can give- odd as only she can too as a girl- and he a boy. I have no idea where I am, halfway into the night- I come to it and see I am in his bed nude, and he is going down on me, lovingly hard! I am enjoying the strange unfamiliar surroundings, of him just work- work- working it! Where? ...?... Where am I? My confused brain struggles over its recent painterly memories.

Holy crap- I said- like that is carp the is holy- said Katie in my mind... ha funny. I am a hotel he owns in Atlantic City. ...In a suite- I see him coming to me, ready for loving making, As I did the last time, we were together, he loves it when I spray all over his face, as he loves doing to me as well! I have stayed in a room like this with Katie. Oh shit. I am in RICHARD C. MAST -’s suite. This room is worth more than the then-White House- and some of those places that why do not care about- How did I get here?

I questioned... memories of the previous night come slowly- back to haunt me, like my sister young life coming to end fast with someone, that did not love her just for hot young sex. She never had a boy toy. Nothing dead at 5! Holy shit. No socks...No jeans... I see this photo of her playing- where she was just being a kid-I see the first time she cum-med, on her little bed, it was the same night- she found out she was going to have to not see me any longer- so Katie showed her to be happy- I glance at the bedside night table- and see her face on the screen that movies the photos. I do not remember coming here. I am wearing my T-shirt, bra, and panties. I FEEL

Broken- The drinking, oh no the drinking, the handset call, oh no the phone call, the vomiting, oh no the vomiting. Katie and then RICHARD C. MAST. Oh no. I cringe inwardly.

The orange juice tastes heavenly, I sit up and take the tablets. On it is a glass of orange juice and two tablets. Advil. He is such a Control freak that he is, he thinks of the whole thing. I do not feel that bad, much healthier than I merit too. Dehydration quenching and invigorating. Nothing beats freshly squeezed orange juice to refresh a parched mouth.

How are you feeling?’ ‘Improved better than I earned,’ I- gabble.

‘How did I get here?’ My voice is small and contrite.

Do not worry about it, he said- fast.

Followed by: ‘Good morning Merry. I peek up at- him, I for one, like- feel like a two-year-old, if I close my eyes when I am not here. There is a knock on the door, for it to open. RICHARD C. MAST -’s sweat; the notion does odd things to me. My heart leaps into my mouth, and I cannot seem to find my voice, to say come in. He opens the door anyway and strolls in, being all sweet. Holy hell, he has been working out, in tight shorts that show off his backside.

He comes and sits down on the edge of the bed, way, off, like his hair, blowing in the wind as the doors were open to the cityscape. Sweat, hard I take a deep breath and close my eyes, I cannot bear to look at the cheat any longer. He is staring at

me, bright blue eyes, and as usual, I have no idea what he is thinking, even if it is run hard in my mind of all the facts. He is close enough for me to touch, for me to smell, for him to be overpowering- and I want him- oh no- YES! Do I want him!

The towel he had was thrown on the bed at my feet.

He hides his thoughts and feelings so well. Grasps are let out of me for he has me around his neck, going in for it. Like his sex toy that is a rag doll, I wriggle hard. He even takes me from behind over the chair without me giving the okay- I was all his! And I look down and see that I am shaved! Oh my... 'Did you put me to bed?' Did you get me tonight's top?

His face is blank.

'Yes!'

Um- it was an intoxicating cocktail- 'After you passed out, that he gave me last night my little girl down under is still red- and I can walk- so much better than a margarita, I was out in the la-la land- and I do remember the hardcore FREAKING! and now I can speak from experience, this man goes in hard and deep.

'Did I throw up again?' My voice is quieter. Do not worry about getting pregnant I have taken care of that too... with this. An implant was placed by a doter last night when you were passed out- do not thank me!

Do not say anything- do not even think about it- it for your good.

Um- is all I got out before his index finger hashed me- up to- my lips.

‘Did you undress me?’ I whispered...

‘Funny you cute- that’s the least of your worries!’ He spoke.

Um...?

I thought...! I think too much...? He is right...? Or is this wrong...?

‘Monday.’

‘Clever girl. When do you start?’ I press my thighs together at the delicious memory, ‘Slip’ and it reminds me that I need to spread my knees. For her, I shuffle them apart. How long will he make me wait?’ No- yes... she leans forward and kisses my forehead. I am thrown by his casual command, but do as I am bid, and he undoes my bra and unzips my skirt. He pushes my skirt down, cupping behind me as he does, and kissing my shoulder. He leans against me, I and his nose nuzzle my hair, inhaling deeply. He squeezes my buttocks.

‘You intoxicate me, Miss King, and you calm me. Such a heady combination.’ He kisses my hair. Grabbing my hand, he tugs me into the shower.

‘Ow,’ I squeal. The water is practically scalding. RICHARD C. MAST grins down at me as the water cascades over him.

She smiles, I gape at him quizzically. She lifts her head to gaze down at me, a hint of amusement in her eyes, and sighs. She strokes his fingertips down my cheek, then down the length of my body.

‘It was a yearning to burn.’ Computers and robots have taken over the world, nobody needs to read any of that shit, or think. Everything is at our fingertips with cell phones, I pad, and PC's, without looking through old dusty pages, plus Its agents the law to think for yourself, and read any books. We burn books like most have the burning itch to have unpredicted sex.

We burn books like most have the burning itch to have unpredicted sex now morning, like the alarm, going off to let me know so... its 7 am... on a Monday- and the year is 2070. I have great frustration with myself as I frown at my look in the mirror, not what you call ass ugly- but days like this one you just wish you were dead... all girls no that feeling.

The feeling of worthlessness was over-warming me. ‘Look at this hair what a mess- I said- in my mind, rolling my eyes and making faces as I go to pick my nose.’ It is just not doing what I want... I said whispering. Hell... look at it- my hair my face- and eyes, like- just freaking sucks today, I finally said it out loud- yet the cat looked like I was crazy too- for talking. Damn Harper for being sick and lay open to me to this nightmare... of like having to do this... for her.

I do not want to but- it is for her. I feel I have too- n- all.

I should be studying for my final exams, and I am in high school girl- looking forward to graduation- intern work looks good for a job, coming up like I won't be 17 years of age until July of this year- but it looks good to have- the ass-

kissing- no? All the test- all the test- God just wants to be done with it all- like which are all this week.

Yet here I am trying to brush my hair into submission and look cute... hard for a girl like me said by the others- not by me. I must not sleep with it wet anymore- God last night just jumped in the bed nude... and masturbate 10 times, I use a vibrator, and dildo- but most of the times I use my hands, I started when I was 6- manly to get to sleep by passing out afterward- to get up... and look at all of this that you see here. at the time- 16 as of this, today boys ask all the time- Bra size: 34b yah I no.

Underwear type: thongs, boy-shorts, when you developed pubic hair 11 Do you Shave/Wax? When did you start? 12 Do you masturbate?

Yes, with a dildo going in out coming hard over and over for some boy that you wish was real. When did you start? That why I said it- Have you had sex? Not yet- How old were you the first time?

Um? That would be nice- so I would not feel like a complete loser.

Have you given oral sex to a guy? How old were you the first time?

Yes, at 9-year-old... Have you been fingered? Ah, yes like

when I was 10. How old were you the first time? I said it... it is true.

Do you change in front of girlfriends? Family? Yes, friends and mom, and my girls. Skinny-dip? Yes, with friends... the top questions boys ask me... about who they think I am. And all they care about.

Anyways- I must not sleep with it wet. Reciting this mantra several times, I endeavor, once more about it all, to bring it under control with the brush as I finger myself- just to get the edge off- getting one rubbed out before the day starts. I roll my eyes in exasperation and gaze at the pale, brown-haired girl with blue eyes too big for her face staring back at me and giving up.

My only option is to restrain my wayward hair in a ponytail and hope that I look semi-presentable. Shannia is my roommate, us- we- are just two girls trying to make it without Mom and Dad holding our hands- you know how it is- I want to be a big girl- playing house they call it.

I would say that she should be the one doing this for me. But I have too... Consequently, she cannot attend the interview she had arranged to do with me; so-o I would not blow chunks on the poor ass hole like he is some dick- some mega industry-list tycoon that I have never heard of... you the type of old crabby dick sucker. That gets joy out of betting off under the desk to girls like me, hand coffee.

Like, I just want to work for the student newspaper, so I must do this- for college... and get nothing out of it...?

So, I have volunteered to do this agent my well and better judgment. I know what is going to be... me getting hurt and having to come home crying, and need to come hard, in my undies- off to the side. I have final exam calls for me to do this, one essay to finish they call- yah sure you suck the man off- for it, and I am supposed to be

working this afternoon and be happy- sure. Smile and walk away- is what I do- in school, not know shit about this job- no education at all- here.

Thanks... I think on the inside... but no - today- like I must drive one hundred and seventy-five miles, me paying for it all- no question is asked- to sit down and get ass freaked- in a scene- all the way down to downtown New York to meet the mysterious RICHARD C. MAST of Ellie Magazine head shit of bad writing- Inc.

As a brilliant businessperson and major sponsor of our school, his time is extraordinarily precious (my school would say not me) - much more precious than she tells me... my teachers that is I need it with SATs- yeah- right... Damn her extra-curricular activities. If I wanted that I would have suck and blowing a trumpet in the band for 6 years. It is fingering he- he.

Shannia is huddled on the couch, rubbing, and humping a pillow- in the living room spread open she turns- as I should be- with her... she is diddling herself as a 17-year-old will do... that just for fun- yelling making the old ass next door pissed. They creep- look at us- shaking their head to what they do not understand, just calling us the slut generation- as they sand on their verandas. Like you can do it on the veranda- of your apartment?

He- he- I get it- she is open... to it... it was said. 'Mary, I am sorry about cutting out on you. It took me nine months to get this interview... from my dick suckers at school- It will take another six to reschedule, and a reset of my last year but I not going. I will just drop out... it is what they want... anyway- you are dumb- I said.

Come with me so-o we will both have graduated. As an editor with honors, I cannot blow this off- you should not either- come on like what you have done. I would rather just masturbate all the time... okay...? I said... (You can make more doing that... she said under her breath.)

Please,' Shannia begs me in her harsh, sore throat voice for sucking one off the night before. How does she do it? Even sick she looks freaking beautiful, strawberry blonde hair all in place and blue bright eyes, although mine looks wet and water like the way she should look doing what she has just done.

'Nice butt pug... ha- thanks she said.' I ignore my twinge of annoying sympathy for my low self-esteem. 'Of course, I will go Shannia if you- his- me here- and she points downward. You should go back to bed with me.

Would you like some Nyquil or Tylenol mixed with alcohol?' That such do it...? 'All of the above, please... Here are the questions for you, did I need to do this just to be a writer- of shit. So, her my recorder does not pay it back you may get porn sounds of last night. Just press the record here- see the button that says recorded. Make notes, I will transcribe it all- for you, I know you cannot do that- without bitching about it.'

'I know nothing about him,' I murmur over and over, trying to find something I may like about him, and failing to quash my rising dread and fear. 'See these here the list in her hand- a crumpled piece of paper- all the questions just ask these and you will do fine- got them from google- like what I did through high school

google well teach you- not your teachers, see- see you through that in a line- and you look smart to this dick- that is what it is all about kissing ass. Go, love- It is a long drive where you do not want to look bad in front of the big-time faggot.

I do not want you to be late- your right- so he is gay.’ That what they say- freak him and see and let me no- nice... slut I said to her- you know it- she said back. ‘Okay, I am going- do not hurt yourself there. Get back to bed- and put that thing away or shave it. Going to eat out later- WHAT? Food- food latter.’ I stare at her fondly. Only for you, Shannia, would I do this? ‘I will do it all like all ways- good luck- G- thanks- you care? I spoke. And thanks to Mary - as usual, you are my lifesaver.’ Getting together my schoolbag, I smile ironically at her, then head out the door down all the steps to the car. I cannot believe it, I have let Shannia talk me into this.

Nevertheless, then Shannia could talk anyone into anything, she was the hot one in school, not me. She will make an exceptional journalist- I am sure of it so would have I if I would have been given the chance. She is communicative, robust, convincing, quarrelsome, lovely - and she is my sweetheart, sweetie of a friend. The roads are clearly wet, rain covered yet, I set off from home, it is early, and I do not have to be in New York until three this afternoon to be on time. I am not sure if my old car, well make the journey in time- she is an incredibly old girl.

Oh, a fun drive, and the miles slip away as I floor the pedal- backfiring all the way. My journey's end is the headquarters of Mr. Durval 's global enterprise that

he so-called made all on his own doing. It is a huge 100-story office building, all curved glass, and steel, an architect's modern imaginary, with Durval wrote inconspicuously in brace over the crystal-like a glass of front revolving doors, and all on the building high up.

It is a quarter to three when I come to my destination, relieved that I am not late as I walk into the mammoth - and frankly unapproachable - glass, steel, and white stonework antechamber. In arrears, the solid sandstone is the desk of dark wood, an extremely attractive, dressed up, young girls' smile is all too creepy for my liking- enjoyably at me- like they want to know all about me- be their eye. She is wearing the sharpest charcoal suit jacket and white shirt I have ever seen. She looks immaculate. 'I am here to see Mr. Durval.

I am - so and so- I said- yes okay- it does not matter take a- number, I call you when I fill it your time to see this man. So, I have- to kiss your ass to do this lady she said all possible- yes or you can walk out the door. FREAK YOU! I said to here no told me up- bossy for me- but 3 hours is too long to be puss- freaked around with. She arches her eyebrow slightly as I stand self-consciously before her. I am beginning to wish I had borrowed one of Shannia's formal blazers rather than wear my shorts and a tank top. I tried and worn my only skirt, my no-nonsense brown knee-length boots, and a blue sweater. For me, this is smart. I tuck one of the escaped tendrils of my hair behind my ear as I pretend, she does not intimidate me. 'Miss, we have expected you but not looking like you roll out of bed. Please sign in here,

Miss Merry, you will want the last train over there to go up-on the left, press for the twentieth hounded floor.’ She smiles kindly at me, amused no doubt about it, as I sign in- and sigh- and stop and get a dress- for this man that too old to get it up to care about me showing it all off. ‘Stuff your eyes with wonder, I always say, live as if you would drop dead in ten seconds- like most that do these days, and your body is bunt on the spot in plain sight for the world to see- just like a book- no one cares about what inside of you- is all cold what on the cover- not the text just the picture. See the world... good now look at it- I do not see anything to live for- It is more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in place of work my way.’

She indicators to me and as I go past security as a GUEST- very confidently and yet shy- stamping on the forward-facing. I cannot help my smirk.

Surely, it is obvious that I am just visiting. I do not fit in here at all. The train beaters with a gust of air moving past me fast- mag-lev- me with incurable swiftness to the floor in under zip time. The doors slide open to let more androids work in and out, I call them a waste of what we- you and I could be doing, and I am in another outsized antechamber - again all glass, steel, and white sandstone. I look up at the top- seeing the sky go from blue to black... Yet to me and most this is nothing these days.

Nothing changes in my life, just a new day of shit, I- inwardly sigh. Thanking the train for the ride, I walk over to the- bank of silos past the two security men who are both far more vigorously dressed than me, in their blue armed suits.

I am threatened by another desk of sandstone and another young blond-haired person- no name just a number- looks at me dressed faultlessly in black and white who does not even rise to greet me, or care I am there. Other to pop gum- and look at the ID- slightly- that the robots' job she said- I do not get paid to do that or think- so why do it? 'All and sundry I left something behind when he passed think in my thoughts, my grandfather said- too always' work hard.

2

A child, a book, a painting, a house, or a wall built, or a pair of shoes made- you are smart- go for your dreams even if the world is not a wonderful place. Or a garden planted- now looks at the world- plant things ha. Something your hand touches in some way- has meaning always, like part of your soul has somewhere to go when you die, remember that- yes right- I roll my eyes- at that too.

'Why...? Why is it?' we go...? That was all I remember before they put him down- and let him up. I was kicking and scrambling- and they ripped me away at 10 years old- it how it must be- MOM said. 'Too much of a cost on us taxpayers. Death and end of funds... is life.' Miss, could you wait here the bot said, please?' She points to a seated area of white skin covered chairs.

Behind the leather chairs are a spacious glass-walled meeting room with an equally spacious dark wood table and at least twenty matching chairs around it. Beyond that, there is a floor-to-ceiling window with a view of the New York skyline, that appears out through the city on the way to the Sound. It is a spectacular panorama,

and I am temporarily paralyzed by the view and the look down all glass flooring too.
Wow- I said amazed...

I sit down, fish the questions from my satchel, and go through them, inwardly cursing Shannia for not providing me with a brief biography. I know nothing about this man I am about to interview. He could be ninety or he could be thirty. The uncertainty is galling, and my nerves resurface, making me fidget. I have never been comfortable with one-on-one interviews, preferring the anonymity of a group discussion where I can sit inconspicuously at the back of the room.

To be honest, I prefer my own company, reading a classic British novel, curled up in a chair in the campus library. Not sitting shuddering apprehensively in an immense glass and stone structure. I just rolled my eyes at myself in the many shiny objects around me just like this showing too much ass.

Like- get a hold of it- it is just a man winkie look at me in the face- why is this okay? I said to myself. Judging building for adding nudes in artwork, which is too scientific and cold-modern, I guess Old is in his thing: fit, tanned, and fair-haired to match the rest of the personnel. My only warmth is the glow of fire lights- just for show-An an additional elegant thing-y-me-bob-er, a more nude girl is compromised sexual poses' flawless girls showing it all, shit look at this compared to that- not good- not good... I see younger no-names blond-haired person comes out of a large- acting mindless door that lights open with their barcode on their rest.

With a deep breath, I stood up. 'Miss' it is time. It is like a death march I thought... with the creepy music in the background- playing in my implanted headset... adjusting automatically. Every person in the whole dying world must leave something behind when he/she/it dies- it- being the no names- that are just- works that have not met the grade of IQ of 50 or less, my grandfather they are not dumb some are at 10- smoking and drugging- nothing more- just no work in them.

So, this is what they do- make them drummer... hand out money for nothing- they can even come up to a child of 3 making a book or a painting or tie a pair of shoes or make them.

Otherwise, a garden planted... something your hand touched some way, so your soul has somewhere to go when you die, and when people look at that tree or that flower you planted, you are there. 'Indeed,' I clear my throat- of what was hard to swallow. 'Certainly.' There, that sounded more confident- when I have voices in my hand say you will never do SHIT. 'The RICHARD C. MAST will see you in a moment. May I take your jacket- miss the deadbeat said?'

'Oh, sure thing...' I struggle out of the jacket and was nice to the dumb bum. Can I get you anything to eat or drink, would you like: 'Would you like tea, coffee, water- saltines?' Something at all? 'Um - no- thank you- I said back to this- it- female.' This blond-haired person- glares her eyes- at the task, she now must do- for hardly any money- she is incredibly young and uneducated- for a woman of her age sitting at the desk she is at doing this work; and as she asks, turning her attention back

to me as she stumbles to do the simple job. Here it is- 'A glass of water. Thank you,' I murmur not looking up at her- for she, a no-friend. Olivia scurries up proximately and scurries to an entrance/exit on the other side of the room.

'Olivia, please fetch Miss Marry a glass of water.' Her voice is unyielding- and do your job- NOW. 'My request for forgiveness for her lack of skills, Miss- she is only a 25 IQ-er, Olivia is our new intern- part of will help you suck at life program... Please be seated as I do this to for her. Our RICHARD C. MAST will be an additional five or so moments.' It does not matter what you do, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched, right- the girl asked- thinking- I said- do not... she went on saying something that is like you after you take your hands away- is what matters- right. Shut up! She said to it... Olivia returns with a glass of iced water on a hot plate. RICHARD C. MAST insists on all his employees being blonde... dumb shits...?

'Here you go, Miss.' And she dumps it down my lap... 'Thank you.' Dumb Shit! I muttered under my breath... 'We need not be let alone... the dumb one said to me... were a danger to ourselves' and others... We need to be bothered occasionally to see if we are alive. How long is it since you were bothered- how about now by you, About something important, about something real?' Stop asking dumb question's... I said to her... that does not matter in today's life. Echoing on the sandstone floor this blonde tramp over to the large desk, her heels clicking. She sits down, and they both continue their dumb ass work they do not know how to do well. I have worn the

wrong clothes, yet ones more- too sexy, I am wondering idly if that is legal... do look as I do for this...?

Humm? I questioned it... buying a short low-cut dress. She seems to excel at jumping from her seat. She is more nervous than me... looking at me! Sex is all that it is about- right- it is all they want, these days. Olivia turns and says my job is done as she goes through the door. Good, now I do not have to hear that running in my ears.

Olivia jumped up and called the trains. I do not hear the reply... to over niceness. The others turn and look at me as I get up showing way too much skin, they are all seeing all of me- upskirt shot here, some girls smile at the look of my vagina- their dark eyes crinkling at the corners getting all they want to remember about me. 'You don't need to knock - just go in.' She smiles kindly. 'Good afternoon, ladies this man said to them,' he says as he departs through the sliding door looking at all my- eyes dropping at then up.

3

I am trying so hard not to overwhelm my nerves, as I stand unsteadily. Get-together my schoolbag, I leave my glass of water and make my way to the moderately open door- to be shown the way. The door just thrust open as I stumble through- always trapping and clumsy, tripping over my own feet, and tumbling headfirst into the office- where he sits- looking at me with sex eye. Double dog freaking shit dick suck- bite me- I said- as I walked in- good- entrance miss he said... as I am still falling over my two left feet! I am on my hands and knees in the doorway to RICHARD C.

MAST'S office, and gentle hands are around me helping me to stand- they were his- a young hot thing that I was falling for just by the look of well that. I am so embarrassed, damn my clumsiness. I must steel myself to glance up. Holy cow - he is so young.

He extends a long-fingered hand to me once I am upright.

'I am RICHARD C. MAST -. Are you all right, would you like to sit?'

So young - and attractive, extremely attractive. He is tall, dressed in a fine gray suit, white shirt, and black tie with unruly dark copper-colored hair and intense, bright gray eyes that regard me shrewdly. It takes a moment for me to find my voice.

'Um. Actually - 'I mutter. If this guy is over thirty, then I am a monkey's uncle. In a daze, I place my hand in his and we shake. As our fingers touch, an odd exhilarating shiver runs through me. I withdraw my hand hastily, embarrassed. It must be static. I blink rapidly, my eyelids matching my heart rate. I hope you do not mind; I am the RICHARD C. MAST.' 'Are you- so?' His voice warm sexual, perchance entertained, but it is difficult to tell from his impassive expression. He looks mildly interested, but polite. 'Merry. I am studying English Literature with my girlfriend you no, um... High school intern...' 'I see he said nicely,' I reasoned with myself some- I see the flicker of loss in the smile of his expression- given, but I am not sure. 'Would you like to sit?' He waves me toward a white leather buttoned L-shaped couch.

His office is way too big for just one man. In front of the floor-to-ceiling windows, there is a huge modern dark-wood desk that six people could comfortably eat around. It matches the coffee table by the couch. Everything else is white - ceiling,

floors, and walls except on the wall by the door, where a mosaic of small paintings hangs, thirty-six of them arranged in a square. They are exquisite - a series of mundane, forgotten objects painted in such precise detail they look like photographs. Displayed together, they are breathtaking.

‘A local artist. Trouton,’ says - when he catches my gaze.

‘They’re lovely. Raising the ordinary to extraordinary,’ I murmur, distracted both by him and the paintings. He cocks his head to one side and regards me intently.

‘I couldn’t agree more, Miss King,’ he replies, his voice soft and for some inexplicable reason I find myself blushing.

‘I feel I’ve known you so many years?’ ‘For the reason that I like you,’ she said, ‘and I don’t want anything from you.’

Apart from the paintings, the rest of the office is cold, clean, and clinical. I wonder if it reflects the personality of Adonis who sinks gracefully into one of the white leather chairs opposite me. I shake my head, disturbed at the direction of my thoughts, and retrieve Katie’s questions from my satchel. Next, I set up the minidisc recorder and am all fingers and thumbs, dropping it twice on the coffee table in front of me.

RICHARD C. MAST says nothing, waiting patiently - I hope - as I become increasingly embarrassed and flustered. When I pluck up the courage to look at him,

he is watching me, one hand relaxed in his lap and the other cupping his chin and trailing his long index finger across his lips. He is trying to suppress a smile.

‘Sorry,’ I hesitated, about me- being me. ‘I’m not used to all of this- or always like this- at least I try not to be.’ ‘Take as much time as you want, Miss,’ he says.

‘Once you have taken so-o much worry to set up the recorder on your phone - you ask me now?’ ‘Do you mind if I record your answers- that was my first question?’ I flush up some- beat red. I flutter my eye at him softly and sweetly, unsure what to say or do in front of this young attractive man, and he takes misfortune on me because he sympathizes at my age- and sheepishness. He is playful, mocking, full of fun and life, giving me, I hope not to just cut my wrists with safety scissors- for being dumb. ‘No, I don’t mind at all.’ This is what I said.

‘Did my girlfriend- explain what the interview was for?’ Same 10 questions all you kids ask- I get it. ‘Oh...!’ ‘Surely, to give the impression in the matriculation issue of the student newspaper- I have to do this part of the graduating- thing... as I shall be discussing the grades at this year’s graduation ceremony- with the higher up.’ Oh- um-hum!

This is news to me, ha- not really- your part of my program at the school- yep, I said. I frowned some, uninteresting my naughty thoughtfulness back to what I was asked to do- the job. Besides, I am momentarily pre-engaged by the thought that someone, not much older than I- okay, like I am 17 he is 30 years or so, and okay,

mega-successful, likes me a little- like is going to present me with my degree- if I do all that he asks- ALL. 'Good,' I swallow nervously. 'I have some questions, RICHARD C. MAST.' I smooth a stray lock of hair behind my ear.

My cheeks heat at the realization- he is looking at me- like a boy that wants a hot heated horny - hook up, and I sit up, and fair my shoulders show my dress is not showing to much- to look taller- and doing so- his eyes move down- showing that now- just more threatening- kill him with sex and I have him eating me out- my hand that is. Yeah- that is the saying... 'I supposed you might,' he says, disapproving.

He is amused at me- as he is looking for me over with a lot of intentions. Pressing the start button on the recorder, I try to look professional. I think- about all the books my granddad had all lost in the great fires, of things not to be known... it is all on here now- I look at my I phone/pad 20 on my wrist licked into my brain waves.

All that needs to be smart is done for you... at the swap of a finger. 'There must be something in books, something we cannot imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there, there is not the law said as they put my grandmother down- with them in flam. You do not stay for anything- the man in red and black said.' Remember the stories.

I snap out of my daydream- of all that is him- and the past. 'You're incredibly young to have amassed such an empire. To what are you in debt too with your success?' Like a god? No... I peep up at him- biting my lip. His smile is rueful, but he looks vaguely disappointed.

Yet- 'If you hide your lack of knowledge, no one will hate- on- you and you'll never- ever learn- from it.' 'Maybe you're just fortunate.' This is not on Katie's list of things to do. However, he is so superior. His eyes flare momentarily in surprise.

'Business is all about individuals- dumber than smart, Merry, and I am particularly good at judging people- I can see what you are and what you will do for me already. 'If you hide your ignorance, no one will hit you and you'll never acquire anything.'

I know how they tick you and me- how they think- and what you are thinking now about me Miss, what makes the show, what makes them cleverer, what motivates them and what does not, and how to incentivize them. I play the game to a point- you get what I am saying- I do not have to act- they all just want me- and want to be... for me being me. I am everything more than a God... to my pupates. So, I am a girl on a string for you- know you do as I say or walk. I see- I said shy biting my lip harder... as the strain of his tone.

I hire an extraordinary team... I would not stand- for less than that. 'If not, they can take their ass out my door and not waste my time, I have no time for shit on a silver plat- Miss- passed off as good food- aka good work-in this case.' and I give compensation well- to those that earn it.

Um- I said along- 'With school turning out more racers, steeplechasers, competitors, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and creative creators, the word 'scholarly,' unquestionably,

technologically advanced the swear word it is worthy to be.' I get what you are saying- I have always done more than other girls. Um -You do know this is going to a paper- right? The word or word...? Um... he said that is cute and a sweet thought.

He pauses and fixes me with his somber stare- yet lustful- and unfulfilled in his accomplishments- something was missing- with him I thought. 'My certainty is to attain victory and many trumpets in any structure one must make oneself dominant in that structure... I know it inside and out- just like felling you out inside and out, (That is what he was doing felling me out.) -Know every detail- about a young woman.

'I work firm and freak hard- whit the ones that want to freak, extremely hard. I make decisions based on reason and truth. Figuring all the ass holes and pussies in the process.' Um- like- do you want me to write that down word or word?

Sure...! He said- I am so sick of this... same things by girls like you... what do you want to know... I have an ordinary gut character, that can spot and encourage a good dense inkling and good individuals. The result is, it is always down to a good society.'

'I do not contribute to luck or chance or what some call blessings, Miss. I and I only have done this... The firmer I work the better breaks I seem to have- by curing out those that believe in something that is not real to me. It is all about having the right individuals on your side and pointing their energies in the right direction for that reason.

‘You sound like someone that has to have full out-it’s control not letting it all go till you say or time is do.’ The words are out of my mouth before I can stop them, for sounding too sexual.

‘Oh, I exercise control in other ways, I said to him,’ I bet you do he said, with a trace of wit in his sweet smile. I look at him, and he holds my gaze steadily, impassive. My heartbeat quickens and my vagina tightens, and my face flushes again and he feels me in. I wish he would stop doing that... looking at me like he wants to freak hard... and not stop until I come 10 or more times on him. Why? Why does he have such a demoralizing result on me, yet so flawless... in everything he says. Um- He continues, his voice soft.

His overwhelming good looks. The way his eyes intensity blue at me. The way he strokes his index finger in and against his lower lips then touching my face with the other its right... sweet hot steamy lust.

‘Do you feel that you have an enormous power of your girls to do as you say?’ Taking them for your bitches? You are not like most schoolchildren I had in here... I like that you do not mind speaking your mind, yet I would have to teach you to be humble... wouldn’t I? -And obedient... he said. I immense power... of all my workers in here and out... developed by promising control over all things. you were not born into this I would say- you need to stick to the page. It is secret... in that, its reveries that you made your money by having your mom and dad hand it to you?’ No... cute... go on, he said.

My mouth drops open- when he said you need to shut the freak up. I am staggered by his lack of unpretentiousness; you see... punk kids like you piss me off... so... you want me to freak you has nothing to do with me getting this job? 'Sure, it doses... yet you must be right- in all ways. What are the ways- yell see in time?' This is recorded you no... I said shaking my legs together by his hand touching me softly.

'It is all about the influence and feeling it, if you will, with me. If I were to decide that I was no longer involved in the communications occupational and sell up, twenty-five thousand individuals would skirmish to make their hypothecation expenditures after a month or so has passed.' 'I employ over fifty thousand public, Miss. That gives me a certain sense of obligation to do whatever I do, the way I want to do it, and how- when, and why... it is all my say... or no say at all.' You get that- Marry Shah?

He said sternly.

'Do I bother you- sir-asking a dumb question, that I have to ask for your freaking program that I give jack shit about... because really, I could be home playing with myself right now... and coming in some boy's photo- I don't need this?'

~*~

'Don't you have a board to answer to?' I ask, disgusted. Why you- I do not have them- your answer to me... and me alone... I over rolled them and pushed them out-it is all my say. 'I own my establishments, they do not- why would I have ass

wipes tell me how to do my shit. I am the Trump of my day and age... what do you say about that? I can go if this is too hard for you. He just smiled. As I lean forward showing my boobs some... just some. I do not have to answer a board.' If that was the dumb question.

He raises an eyebrow at me just muttering on about nothing.

I flush, even more, unquestionably you are the God, here, right? Cute Miss... move on, he said. I would know this if I had done some research. Not knowing all about me shows that your shy and weak... and have a lack of respect for who I am, he is so arrogant- I thought. I change tack, and see that I am not even halfway done...

'Do you have anything you love to do outside of your work?' 'Like- That's the question- go for it...'

'I have diverse hobbies, Miss.' A hint of a smile touches his lips- yet those eyes are still locked on mine- not letting go. 'Very wide-ranging.' And for some reason, I am mystified and frenzied by his firm stare into my heart looking into my eyes... wet at this point from being reamed too hard. His eyes are ablaze, like mine with some fantastic and nasty sexual thoughts of him just pounding the shit out of me with his lusty sex making.

4

'Do you believe in love at first sight?' Why did I ask? 'Just curiosity...!' He said... looking in my love-stricken, and lovesick eyes. Yes, I was taken back by him...

yet could not show it... 'Nonetheless, if you work so hard, what do you do unwind- or just relax?' He smiles, revealing textbook and twilight novel white teeth so right yet so wrong, I stop breathing and forget how too- like. He is beautiful- for an older man- I felt all hot down under. No one should be this good-looking, and make a young lady feel this way about herself. It is just not fair to us girls.

'Well, to 'chill out' as you put it - I said, I fly, I indulge in- various physical pursuits.' He shifts in his chair. 'I'm a very wealthy man, Miss King, and I have expensive and absorbing hobbies.' I peek swiftly at Katie's questions, wanting to get off this subject of sex and work. 'You invest in engineering. Why, precisely?' Did I enquire about the thought- why? Why- does he make me so uneasy, anxious, nervous, and troubled? 'I like to form things into submission bending and shipping them.'

I like to know how all things work to crack all that it is- to see what makes it tick: what makes things tick, how to construct and deconstruct. As well as I have a love of ships. 'What can I say?' one thing I have not cracked it a woman's mind... 'That thuds of a sound to me like your heart speaking rather than reason and specifics.' 'Though there are individuals who would say I don't have any emotions of warmth- that I am just cold and heartless.' He stares appraisingly at me, and his mouth coincidences up, well said- perchance. 'For the reason that they know me well- or so they think they do.' His lip ringlets in an ionic beam. 'Why would they say that?'

‘I am seventeen and I am crazy or so they say- yet smart enough to be here. My grandfather said the two always try. When people ask your age, he said, always say seventeen and insane- it- we in-lighten them.’

I went on asking-would you say that you are someone that makes friends easily; or that you have any? Otherwise, are you easy to get to know?’ Plus, I regret the question as soon as I say it. It is not on Katie's list; it was on mine to see if he was at all like me one or less loyal friend.

‘I am a precise secluded person, Miss. I for one go a long way to defend my disclosure. I do not often give dialogs out too public,’ he is voiced softens as the sentence went off into a long one on like lost in a rambling thought. ‘Why did you come to an understanding to do this one then?’

‘The decent writer touches’ on life often like a lusting young girl. The unexceptional ones run a quick hand over her. Feeling in all the voids, the bad ones’ rape her and leave her for the bugs to eat away the leftovers.’ So- for all aims and determinations, I could not get Katie off my back.

I know how stubborn Katie can be. That is why I am sitting here wriggling unpleasantly under his all-pervading gaze- that is yet so perfect when I should be studying for my exams- or just doing what she was doing herself- right? ‘Like- she asked repeatedly, and harried my PR folks, and yours truly respects that kind of stubbornness.’

‘You also invest in unindustrialized knowhow. Why are you absorbed in this area of writing when there are no good books anymore- is it all sexed up media and shit you want to give out to horny kids to read less than 3 lines on their buzzing boxes- to kill their brains even more?’ ‘I have to put up with it- Miss- for it- sales... SEX, DUGS, and be-bop-pop music are what it’s all about- yet I want more out of your text- if you work for me.’

‘NOT- All visuals... without gluten...?’ ‘We can’t consume money if there is no bread, Miss, and there are too many people on this planet who don’t have enough to eat- that is good for you.’ You get what I am saying to you?’ Is it something you feel zealous about? Like- Nursing the world’s poor do you help the ones in this county that are in need?’ ‘That sounds very humanitarian... sure- whatever they want to suck out of me... right?’ Whatever looks good...He moves his shoulders up and down in a way that was not okay to me. ‘Feeding the world’s poor, I can’t see the financial benefits of this, it’s discerning business,’ he murmurs, though he is being insincere. It does not make sense - only the virtue of the idyllic. I peek at the next question that is on my list made by Katie, disorderly by his arrogance I shudder to look up. ‘Is there a method to your madness?’

I asked the question. If so, what is it?’ I do not have a- method to do things- I just make it work- for I make it work- how is that? A supervisory belief - Carnegie’s: ‘A man who gets the ability to take full ownership of his mind, may take proprietorship of whatsoever else to which he is justly permitted.’ I am very

extraordinary, single-minded. I like order- of myself- and all other things in this thing we call life, and those all around me.'

'You come off like the decisive purchaser.' 'I want to earn to possess them, but yes, bottom line, I do.' 'So-o you want to possess things?' You are a control freak. 'I am... if you want to say I am Miss. Say what you like really- they all do your age.'

He smiles, but the smile does not touch his eyes.

Again, this is at odds with someone who wants to feed the world, so I cannot help thinking that we are talking about something else, but I am mystified as to what it is. I swallow hard.

The temperature in the room is rising or it is just me. I just want this interview to be over. Surely Katie has enough material now. I glance at the next question.

'You were adopted- like me, there was a story that came over for another county other than the US. Is that true- or not? Do you think your past made you who you are today? Too personal? Yes- but I go there- it has not... I made me. Oh, this is, asking too much... I gaze at him in the love needing eyes, hoping he is not offended- by my stupid. His brows channel together downward and arch. My curiosity is annoyed by him I could tell... 'I have no way of knowing.' 'How old were you when you were approved for a stable home?' I was 5 and used to my mother. 'That's a matter of public record, Miss- you can get that anywhere.' His tone is harsh. I flush up

yet again. Crap... I say in my head- yet he heard that also. They all can be the ones that monitor everything I do, I thought and actions.

I move on quickly... doing whatever it is I am doing. Yes of course - if I had known this, I was doing this interview and did not want to be and the school voices hearing was saying, I was losing grading... I would have done some research more now if I did not shape up. 'You've had to lose a family life for your work-life... would you say that is so-o?'

He said: 'I will embrace on to all God's creatures tight one day. I have one finger on it now; that is a beginning- by banning all that you call literature. I am the reason all books were a band; I want complete control.'

Why do you not want us to read? Why- is the question that- you must crack. If you do not get it- then neither do I. He said... 'That's not a question- or anything to ask.' He is terse me some, with his long lines of wording rambling. 'Apologetic I was to this...' I wriggle some in my set feeling wet down there, and he has made me feel like an errant child. I will try it again. 'Have you had to sacrifice family life for your work?'

'I have a family. I have a brother and a sister and two loving parents. I am not interested in extending my family beyond that.' 'So-o is- you quire...?' I rolled my eyes knowing that was not on the list nevertheless, I wanted an A on my report. I may have had a past that I do not like but it was never with another man.

‘What are you gay?’ He said... I know that you have kissed, and made oral love to a girl your roommate Katie, by your racing thoughts, I heard it all and do not hold it against you... why do you with me? RICHARD C. MAST...? Has nothing to do with the sex or whom you have that with... now does it.’

He inhales suddenly thinking and sees my going down on a girl in his mind, and I cringe, mortified... my thoughts... Crap! I said, yet once more in my mind to cover up. Why, didn't I employ filter before, I read this straight out? How can I tell him I am just reading the questions? Damn Katie and her curiosity, said this in my mind, that it would be okay to say to him!

5

‘No, Miss., I'm not the way you are- and your young teen why's.’ Yet I can see you having fun when you are young. And work hard when you are not. He raises his one eyebrow, with an unruffled glow in his eyes. He does not look pleased about me and my girlie past- like he wanted me or something. I fast said- I-man too... The voices in my head... giggle at this point knowing. You are a hopeless romantic,’ he said that all not knowing or knowing what you want. The same things could be in the 'business premises families' nowadays. The same immeasurable feature and awareness could be projected through the radios and televisions but are not. ‘It would be funny if it were not serious. It is not booked you need; it is some of the things that once were in books.

No, no it is not booked at all you are looking for! Take it where you can find it, in old phonograph records, old motion pictures, and in old friends; look for it in nature and look for it in yourself. Books were only one type of receptacle where we stored a lot of things, we were afraid we might forget. There is nothing magical in them at all. The magic is only in what books say, how they stitch the patches of the universe together into one garment for us. Of course, you could not know this, you still cannot understand what I mean when I say all this. You are intuitively right, that is what counts.

‘I apologize. It is um... written here.’ It is the first time he has said my name. My heartbeat has accelerated, and my cheeks are heating up again. Nervously, I tuck my loosened hair behind my ear. He cocks his head to one side slightly. ‘These- ‘isn’t’ your questions, are they?’ They are not... I said back. The blood drains from my head, and I feel as if I passed out some- going all black. Oh no, it flashed past in my head. ‘Katie - Miss. - she assembled the queries to go on with.’ She rushed in with her wording- ‘Nobody listens anymore. I cannot talk to the walls because, they are screaming at me, walls- -those things you look at all the time like cells and notebooks - ‘I cannot talk to my loved ones overall this’ - he said; she listens to the walls. I just want someone to hear what I have to say. And maybe if I talk long enough it will make complete sense.

Then I asked it as a lost little schoolchild want more- saying- ‘Then I want you to teach me to comprehend what I read.’ ‘Are you, colleagues, on the student paper?’

‘No, she’s my roommate not my love of marge- we’re just leaving together.’ Oh, rat crap, I said in my mind- yet he knows. I have nothing to do with the student paper, the girl said, he could see snapshots of Katie playing with herself not want to be a part of all this... It is her extra-curricular activity I said, not mine as of this moment.

My face is aflame with embarrassment- of diddling. He rubs his stubbed hair chin, in the quiet debate, his blue eyes assessing me. ‘Did you volunteer to do this interview?’ He asks, his voice was deadly quiet. Hang on, who is hypothetical to be interrogating whom, His eyes tingle into me- like, and I am obliged to answer with the certainty.

‘I was conscripted to this... She is not well.’ My voice is weak and apologetic, for her... yet they know the truth. ‘We’re not finished here, Andrea. Please cancel my next meeting.’

Where are you from? A small town- she said along with these small towns are fun places; everybody thinks they know everybody. They bought, they sold, live in fear of getting old, getting cold. Life to death, it is all a myth just a wish, only to walk in the dark, to make their mark, in the life they embark.

Yet they know what is so, nowhere to run to go, they come and go, with nothing to show. With some that are high and some low. However, they always know narrow minds never change, only to rearrange, in the exchange. Memories never fade, and the ones that make their lies get paid. It is all slipping away from day today. There is always someone with something to say. Whatever comes, whatever may, it is just

another day... in a small town, with dreams going in the ground, with only names on rocks to be found.

Where one person runs it all and is crowned, we dance like fools, we are her clowns. That is just life bowing down to a small town, it is just the words going around. With so much doom and gloom, lonely nights in a room.

‘That explains a great deal.’ He said...

‘RICHARD C. MAST, forgive me for interjecting, but your next meeting is in two or four minutes.’ ‘You do not have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.’ He spoke. The girl from before is back speaking out of context. She appears lost popping in and out. He turns his head slowly to face her and raises his eyebrows. She flushes bright pink in the face at the why I and he is treating her lack of life. Oh good... you did what was asked of you... good for you... no go be somewhere. It is not just me... or kids getting dumb-er...? I asked...

‘Where were we, Miss?’

‘Some individuals turn sad unpleasantly early in their life. Non-singular motive, it gives the impression, but then again, they are almost innate that way. The staining unceremonious, tire quicker, exclamation more rapidly, evoking lengthier and, as I say, get melancholy younger than anyone else in the ecosphere. I know, for I am one of them, back in the days of before.’ ‘Please don't let me keep you from anything.’ Say all that is on your mind. ‘Very well, RICHARD C. MAST,’ then, he frowns some in his long chat with me and turns his consideration back to the rambling on.

She said: 'There has to be something in books, something we can't visualize, to make a ladies stay in a scorching house; there must be something there that we all need something more unexplained.'

Oh, we are back to 'Miss' now.

He murmurs... on getting softer in his voice, and then he gazes intensely into my love-stricken eyes; all humor was gone when he did that and we locked, and bizarre muscles deep in my lower than my belly clench suddenly in hard lust. His blue eyes are alight with the wicked curiosity of all, that is me and inside my- heart, soul, and more.

Which I should be studying for now rather than sitting in your palatial, swanky, sterile office, feeling uncomfortable under your penetrating gaze.

But you cannot make people listen. They must come 'round in their own time, wondering what happened, and why the world blew up around them. It cannot last.

6

'Don't you look so guiltless- over all that took place, why didn't you give me a biography, he made me feel like such an idiot for economical on the basic investigation.' Katie locks a hand to her mouth. Saying: 'Jeez, babe, I'm sorry - I didn't think about it all the way through.' I feel some grumpiness coming over me with my changing mood.

‘Typically, he was well-mannered, prescribed, stuffy - like he is old before his time. He does not dialog like a man of twenty-something. How old is he anyway?’

‘Twenty-seven. Jeez, I am sorry, Merry, I should have briefed you, but I was in such dread.

Let me have the mini chip for your headset, and I will start transliterating the interview, it is the least I can do.’ Hell, you just want to replay the video admit it! ‘U_NO_IT!’ She flashed through my mind, as text to read like a hologram, yet I could see it in front of my eyes passing by like a ticker.

‘You look better. Did you eat your dehydrated soup- and mac and cheese?’ I ask her to the movie for food, not sex to change the subject. That is all you do anymore is eat, sleep, bitch about that, and CUM!

Yepper- and I’m-a proud of it- she said- humping her pillow! ‘Certainly, and it was delightful, enjoyable, and lovely, as usual. I am having the sensation of feeling much better than I did.’ She smiles at me in gratitude. I checked my watch. ‘I have to run, I can still make my shift at Macy’s, as a clerk, I don’t even think; I well-shower off, I’m going to just come home and do this more- like, um- so why to bother... right...?’

Um- yeah- that turns me on- I said... NOT! You are getting to be lazy and gross! Yes, but you love me so... ‘Merry, you’ll be exhausted- to see me tonight I just know it.’ ‘I will be fine, until you get back, all by myself- a lot of my wandering thoughts. I will see you later... she runs out the door slip on a dress with nothing

under it.' Katie- I am the shit at any DIY. I have worked at Macy's since I started working when I was 14. It is the major self-determining man/woman's wear store in the New York area, and over the four years I have worked here for too long, I have come to know a little bit about most everything we sell - underwire to even I do not wear them ever- although unluckily, I leave all that to my dad to say it is wrong.

Merry- I am much more of a curl-up-with-a-book-in-a comfy- chair-by-the-fire-with-coffee- kind-a- of-a girl and have everything in its place on me and of me, yet she works for me.

Katie- I am glad I can make my shift, to have some money to play with at the end of the week. I bet I could buy you a mill. He said to me... Katie and you let him? Yes...I said. To be there whenever he wants, she asked.

No comment... I did I give her.

I am home looking at my report, it gives me something to have my emphasis on other than all of him- all. We are eventful - it is the start of the summertime of year, and folks are redecorating their homes. My friends that I work with were happy to see me, as always... it has become custom with us.

'Marry Sue! I thought you were not going to make it today- I was going in to work a JC Penny's at 5 'till-10.' And then it back home to be with my cuddle bug, she looks forward to me... 'My tasks suck did not take as long as I thought. I can do a couple of hours of this I said lost in the thoughts of him- and then her and then him and then- him- him- her- aww.'

‘I’m pleased to see you, it was him- look down at me I am looking up so much small, he’s just so-o right.’ She and her start’s re-stocking shelves for me say that a short girl should not be doing this job, and I am soon absorbed in the task, yet lost in love- of being in love. And- aw- yes with him... I stumble backward and he saves me from falling... like to my death... or something... it was sweet. When I arrive home later, Katie is wearing headphones, seeing all that happen, she is pissed, and working on her laptop, frantically editing by down report that I was okay with leaving as is.

Her nose and puss-puss still pink for having a head could for giving- wellhead to random high school boys, the day before- she a good kid what can I say- it pays, but she has her unfiltered wording into a story now, so she is focused and typing furiously run-ons. I flush, by her and the thoughts of him also... I was feeling both.

I am methodically exhausted - dog-tired- by the long drive back home even if I was looking over the past days of my life on the windshield screen of the car, the exhausting think about the interview, she had my pc on the luster rock tabletops by my bed, and me cum covered dildo at her feet, she thinks that more loving or something to our mine.

I slump on to the couch with for more- sexy time, foreplay and boob playing, thinking about the essay I must finish and all the studying I have not done today because I was holed up with... him and getting her and me off more than 50 times today- yet that is the norm. I flush, and my heart rate inexplicably increases with

ever stock in and out of my puss, and her rubbing my clit- That was not the reason, surely, He just wanted to show me around so I could see that he was lord of all he surveyed, and I was thanking him and that man too. I realize I am biting my lip, and I hope Katie does not notice. But she seems absorbed in her text. I see him over there giving me the eye- He wanted to spend more time with you, they said- why not take it one noise teacher said.'

I should have- but the task was done to its fullest-no?

'Yes'- 'we all do.'

'You've got some good things said here, Merry, so well done, is what the team says going sitting in the broad room at school as there were reading the copy on their handheld notebooks. I cannot believe you did not take him up on his offer to show you around. I hear what you mean about formal, here in your writing a little too stuffy said the same one.

That is fine I would rather have that than what I have been getting- with the other girls it was nothing but sexed up sex- and sex talk, so I will take this over having to read that. Yet he has asked for you- not them to be with him more... do you want it? Did you take any notes on being his girl?' she asks. She gives me a short-lived puzzled look, as to why I have made it in.

'Um... no, I didn't,' I said.

Why?

‘I didn’t think it needed to be that also, to be a writer.’

‘That's fine I see the point you are making. Did I make a fine article with this... then right? Good-looking son of a bitch, isn't he? Said the one... yah why her. I overhear when walking out the door getting a pat on the back by the older woman that had some brains.’ ‘I suppose so, I said looking at her and shyly smiling.’ I try hard to sound neutral, and I succeed, yah no. ‘Oh come on, Marry - even you can't be immune to his looks.’

She arches an eyebrow perfectly at me, in the cute way that only she can. Crap is what I said! I distract her with flattery, and sweetness, always a good ploy on this girl who loves me for doing such. ‘You probably would have got a lot more out of him, if you would have done what you did to me with him and on him- she said.’ Think of something - quick, I knew what she was going to ask- and I thought quickly. ‘So, what did you think of him?’ Damn it, she is nosey. Why cannot she just let this go, about me and him, and what I must do. ‘I doubt that Merry.

Come on... Like, he accessible you a job. Given that I imposed this on you at the last minute, you did very well then.’ She glances up at me speculatively. I make a hasty retreat into the kitchen.

‘You, fascinated by a man, more than me and what I must give and gave you. That is a first,’ she snorts, you give me more than what I boy can. She rolled her eyes at me. ‘He's very driven about what he wants in life unlike you, you have no drive to do extortionately, yet unlike you here is controlling, and arrogant with me -

scary really, how overpowered he is... but very alluring. I can understand the fascination,' I add truthfully, as I peer 'round the door at her hoping this will shut her up finally. I started gathering the makings of a sandwich so she cannot see my face, as I walk to the counter, there all no walls, everything is see-through glass, even the bathroom is open to the world outside.

'Why, did you want to know if your gay or not, incidentally, that was the most embarrassing question, I am not I just love you're for you get me, I was mortified.' I scowl with my nose wrinkling at the memory of seeing this in my eyes passing by like a movie clip- like It was so-o embarrassing. The whole thing was uncomfortable.

I am glad I will never-ever-ever- must lay eyes on him again.'

'Oh, Marry Sue, it can't have been that bad- yah no. he sounds quite taken with you, like lovey and shit.' Taken with me, what does that mean, now do not be ludicrous, in jumping the gun. 'Would you like a sandwich,' 'ha- that all I do for you have sex with you and make you a sandwich- and do your chores.'

'Please- and think.'

'Yah- yah- yah- suck it she said. 'You don't have one or I would.'" I said back. I curl up in my bed with her, wrapping my throw around me, that she made me in 8th grade, then I close my eyes, with her around me, and I am instantly asleep, could he do this for me I thought before the lights went out. That night I dream of dark places, loss, and death, and sadness.

For the rest of the week, I throw myself into my studies and my shitty ass job that sucks hairy balls.

Katie is busy too do her and, compiling about her last publication of her student in the schools weekly, E-paper; before she must surrender it to the new editor while also shoving for her finals. Damn, but that girl was in the wrong place at the wrong time in the wrong century with her work life, you stay home back in the 2,000's and play with yours back then, not these days, where a girl wants to be independent.

By the time I finish, its midnight, and Katie has long since gone to bed. I made my way to my room, exhausted, but pleased that I have accomplished so much on a Monday. She is bored and wants something to occupy her time, but she has the attention span of a guppy. It will be something new next week.

So, I call my mom using my mind as a phone, to check on her, but also so she can wish me luck for my final exams. She proceeds to tell me about her latest venture into pot making and art- that so bad she cannot put it into words. My mother is all about new business ventures that are flopping.

Katie- By Friday, she is much better the day before I felt, and I no longer must endure the sight of her PJs, which should have just stayed off. We did not talk all that much more that evening, to my relief. Once we have eaten, I am able to sit at the banqueting table with Marry and, while she works on her article, I work on my essay about the Holocaust.

Merry- hard to chat, think about how- leaving her behind was wrong in her mind- I hesitate, and I have Mom's full attention. She, my mother that is worried about me- being young and small and what man can do to me. She wants me to be with the girl, not someone that only there to take... I hope she has not mortgaged the household to finance this latest organization.

‘I'm fine,’ I said. Do you need money, honey? You worry me.’

‘No- I want to do this on my own.’ ‘You sure’ - ‘Mom, I'm fine just leave it alone.’

It is a brief conversation; it is even hard to get done with. It is not so much so a conversation as kicks my guts and make me grunt in response to my gentle sweet-talking of not be mean, Its Friday night, Katie and I are debating what to do with our evening, other than bedtime, - we want some time away from the studying also, and from our working too hard for less than a \$1. 50 an hour, and from student newspapers, that only pays 50 cents a word, and that is if it passes the editor.

Sometimes, I marvel and am curious about the thoughts of if there is something wrong with me. I have spent too long in the company of my literary romantic book or cracking my brainwriting, or gutting on out rubbing it, and consequently my ethics, and opportunities are far too high. Nonetheless, in realism, nobody has ever made me feel like that, by her- yet he could too- maybe? Saturday at the store is a nightmare. And the days keep rushing by without any other's thoughts of him or her... what to do?

I am engrossed in the task of redoing what was done right in the first place, read-through the items I need to have said in the right ways, and the items I sure I know have missed that were there, my eyes are flicking from the order E-book that I have from the past on proficient writing, to the computer screen and back as I check the entries match.

Then, for some motive, I glance up... and find myself locked in the bold gray gaze of Chiaz who is standing at the counter of my home as a hologram to investigate me doing what it is I am doing he can do this at any time investigate me, staring at me intently, with lust in his eyes even if it is just a simulation. My heart failure fasts- knowing what is next, sex- with him not there but in my body, he is.

‘Merry... What a surprise, I said walking to my dad her, I lay down for him to the movie through me.’ His gaze is firm and intense, and the moment happens fast. Holy crap...!

‘He said my name,’ In a mutter. ‘What can I help you with, RICHARD C. MAST?’

‘RICHARD C. MAST,’ I whisper at the start, because that is all I can Marry him as not my lover yet. What is he doing here looking at me this way with my messy hair and nude boy standing here, my mouth has dropped open- like my legs and vagina for him, and I cannot locate my brain or my voice, for sighing too much? There is a

ghost of a smile on his lips and his eyes are alight with humor as if he is enjoying some private joke.

‘I was in the area,’ he says by way of exploration. ‘I need to stock up on a few things. It is a pleasure to see you again and feel the insides of you in thought out, Miss Mary Sue.’ His voice is warm and dry like milk melted chocolate fudge on ice-cream all melty... or something like that- mmm.

My heart is pounding a frantic, and for some reason, I am blushing furiously under his steady inspection of being perfect in every way possible. He smiles, and again it is like he is privy of some big secret.

My reminiscences of him did not do him justice, in this dim light, He's not simply good-looking - he is the epitome of male exquisiteness, magnificent, I shake my head and take my wits of the dead and prowls, I was humming yet I was with his body and mind with my eyes tight.

9

Finally, my intellectual functions are restored and re-joined with the rest of my body. I am utterly thrown by the sight of him standing before me, and he is here in my always now. Even at the Store, I feel him.

Go figure...? It is so disconcerting the way I feel after also this being his little salt, yet I want it so bad. Taking a deep breath, I go down on him hard, one more I said it is fine, I put on my professional life out of my mind to be with him.

I have worked hard today so maybe this is okay. he murmurs, his blue eyes cool but smiling like mine. I mutter, my voice soft and wavy moving in my mind. Get a grip, I said, after a half-hour or so my legs are abruptly the uniformity of Jell-O. I am so eager, I decided to wear my best jeans this morning to work just to show him that I love to look this way for him to see through me, like looking into the glass shingling back in his stare, of mine, I try for indifference as I come out from behind the counter, but I am concentrating hard on not falling over my own feet.

My voice is a little too bright, walking ‘around the story today. I glance up at him in regret, yet it is only me that knows he there like, it almost immediately. Damn, he is handsome. I blush, looking downward... and the others in my day have no idea what has happened to me. Acting nuts... ‘After you,’ he murmurs in my head site, gesticulating with his long-fingered, gorgeously manicured hand. With my heart almost throttling me to the point of crazy - because it is in my throat trying to escape from my mouth like he is trying to get out of me from down under.

His fingers trail across the various packages displayed that I have done on the shaving, like the same can be said the way he is touching his fingers over my lips, face, and hair, and for some incomprehensible reason, I must look away for all in the store and close my eyes tightly for my little girlfriend to release. He bends and selects a packet.

‘These will do simply fine this way he said to me looking over my job that is not where I want to be,’ he says with his oh-so-secret smile within me, and I blush,

and he finds me to be sweet and cute. 'Nope, it was so revamping,' he says quickly then smirks and it shows all over my face, and I have the uncanny feeling that he is laughing at me, for shacking it out so hard, in public. And the boss knows it, yet that is the first week dating play-no?

Why, why? -Would this beautiful, powerful, urbane man want to see me? No way can I see it! I dismiss it immediately for feeling like this on the job. I asked, and my voice is too high in my thoughts, he gets me like I have my finger trapped the head site mic too hard. Damn! Try to be cool, Marry Sue!

He gazes at the selection of tops and undies, that I have places nicely in their lines, what on this Earth is he going to do with those, I cannot picture him as a do-it-yourselfer at all, doing woman's work like this... I flush at my foolish wayward thoughts. 'All part of your feed-the-world plan?' I tease... in a dirty thought of what happening when I get home.

'Something like that,' he acknowledges, and his lips quirk up in a smile showing on my face. 'Is there anything else, I need to do I said to my boss at the store?' 'I would like to see you do your job faster without daydreaming. Go home... I do not even want to look at you. You are a waste of my time.' 'Are you redecorating?' The words are out before I can stop them.

Surely, he hires laborers or has the staff to help him decorate? I glance behind me as he follows, always in my mind now- even going into the girl's room,

Am I that funny, I said shyly or Funny looking down there? Ha- he said- just keep being you! And I give that look of confusion...?

...?...?

Blink- Blink-

-Hair shaking out-

-Ponytail left to go- hair flap over right shoulder-

‘This way,’ I murmur uncomfortably about the way I look.

‘Have you worked here long; he is teasing me with- dumb...’

His voice is low and soft make me feel well wet, and he is gazing at me, with blue soulful eyes concentrating hard like his dick sliding inside me, for the first time the days before. I blush even more brightly.

Why does he have this significance to me? Changing into a dress and of uniform- that now gross- cover in girly-ness. I feel like I am threatening years old down there and in here and there too - awkward, as always, and out of place is everything about me. My eyes drop, yet he must look me up and down!

‘One week,’ I mutter as we reach our goal, of me, feel good with him in all places. To distract me from being his lover, I reach down and select the two widths apart and let him go to town on my clit, at this point I could have the world give to me for him doing so. It is zapping through me like I have touched an exposed wire, it

comes out, which I pass to him too in the feelings also. Our fingers brush very briefly in handholding and mind kissing, and the current is there again, I gasp my boobs and he can feel it in his hands-like unwillingly as I feel it, all the way down to somewhere dark, and unexplored even with my eyes still tight, deep in my belly I feel this rush.

Very much, I scramble around for my symmetry- as I know the cameras in the bathroom has gotten it all on a video puck (aka thumb drive.) Yet all they see is me having fun with myself- yet the one that looks over this all get it- yet not my boss for now. ‘Anything else I said as he dresses me through my body?’ My voice is dry and breathy, own like my body. His eyes widen slightly in mine.

‘This way to the door I said.’ I duck my head down, as I pass all the snacking girls, I work with like I try to hide my recurring blush, and head for the aisle out of the store, to a floating lot of cars folded up. (The poor girl- said the old lady- looking over it all.)

I halt at his expression going to my car that is just lower my way like a cab, his eyes deepening shad in mine. Color fading like... trembling, yet again his fingers now deep inside me on the drive home, I feel like such a slut- yet I must have it- even if I was good.

This boy will not stop... Quickly, with, I measure aware that his hot I gaze back into my mind of him wanting all of me. I dare not look at him like a little girl, yet I cannot help it he is my first.

Holy- jizz'n jeez, could I feel, like any more self-conscious, about me being me, done... the back pocket of my jeans is my Id to get into my home, by some miracle, I remember to bring it along this time- I Marry not to remove a finger away for my real age, of how I jumped four years in high school for being smart.

Why must I feel like a little girl... yet he is making me a woman.

10

I know by the end of this year that he and I, we have c*med in each other's body or through each body by concentration manipulation of thoughts 2,165 times.

(Forward one year)

I must not sleep with it wet, yet just I live life too fast and too young to care, I must not sleep with it wet. I am trying to brush my hair into submission. I am mopping with frustration at myself in the mirror for sucking hard at everything... and yes even that too. Damn my hair to hell for sucking more than that also. I should be studying and going to school for the day, for my final exams, which are less than a year and a week away, my only option is to confine my naughty hair in a pigtail after, yet another long night of him pounding me, and hope that I look semi-presentable, when I can even if as if I can walk out the door.

Katie is huddled on the couch in the living room doing her, I ignore my pang of unwelcome sympathy for doing what I want to do all day too. You should get back to bed and be with me all day piss on the school she said. Would you like some

Nyquil or Tylenol, to get knocked out?’ ‘Nyquil, please, as I spend some time with her until she passed out, and then, I leave her clingy hug as she is laying on our bed and go to school.

‘Okay, I am going. Get back to bed with me she said. I made you some postage to heat up later.’ I stare at her fondly as if she were my one and only lover. I cannot believe that I must do all this for you like your mom, I have let Katie talk me into this also like a mom, only for you, I, would I do this for, being your bitch and shit! She said, gathering my book bag, she smiled, then headed out the door to the car, she is articulate, solid, influential, argumentative, yet lovely words, and on like the girl she would become in the days to come - and she is my dearest, dearest friend. But then Katie can talk anyone into anything. Good luck she said handing me the re-right of my paper for class. She will make an exceptional journalist that I am not. Making notes, I am not the best at it at all, yet, I want to be someone someday, so pinning text and more of it.’ Rising terror within me on a half-hour now late for first class.

‘The questions will be racing in my mind, of what to say to cover my ass. Going now. It is a long drive- that I do not have to do- yet I do not want you to be late for what I do not need to live.’ You are my lifesaver for editing I said.’ ‘Why do I put everyone ahead of myself, be so nice, try so hard and become the person that gets hurt the most? What can I do? I have gone through 8 or 9 years with no real friend no best friend nothing. just people who are assholes that I am stuck seeing every day, why? The most compassionate people in the world the people who are truly kind, who are truly considerate-also have the best boundaries. If you do not have and assert personal

boundaries, you will not feel respected or be compassionate towards people after a while.

That does not sound like it makes sense. But here is the thing: Compassion means seeing the best in others. It means empathizing with their struggles and looking for what is good in them. To do that healthily, you must be secure enough in yourself and your own identity that you do not lose your identity in theirs. If you try to empathize without having good personal boundaries, you become the perfect victim- easy to manipulate, easy to control, easy to discard...'

~*~

What I see-

Tell the truth, everyone hates you.

Tell a lie and you do not have a support team.

Tell the truth, you will be forsaken.

Tell a lie, it is history in the making.

Have others there and its dreaming

Have others In- you are- life and their hands are not worth shaking.

Live or lie we are all going to die so why try?

'Yes,' I croak and clear my throat. I roll my eyes at myself. Get a grip, I said. Judging from the building, which is too clinical and modern my apartment is all

white elegant, ‘Yes..’ I take off my jacket?’ ‘Oh please, let it all stop.’ I struggled out of the jacket, knowing what to come more off him ran down and thought of me.

‘Merry! I thought you were not going to make it today, to all your classes at school. You did not why?’ It did not take as long as I thought, to not have thought. I can do a couple of hours overtime to make up for it. I said to my teacher that I did not care either way.’

‘I’m pleased to see you, he said though...’

When I arrive home later, Katie is wearing my headphones and working on my laptop, she is absorbed and typing furiously. I am thoroughly drained - exhausted by the long drive, I slump on to the couch after, thinking about the essay, I must finish and all the studying, I need to do just to suck, I have not done anything notable today, before it starts, because I was holed up with... he wants all of me and more, like a story that has not to be written.

I flush, and my heart rate inexplicably increases with him being with me always. ‘You have some good stuff here, Merry. Well, done. I cannot believe you did not take him up on his offer to show you around, more said the one girl that I got to do half of all my work- so really, I must do is keep him happy. He wanted to spend more time with you, that is why I am here, she said.’ She gives me a fleeting questioning look; says you go home with him now. That was not the reason, surely, I started her I thought, but okay?

He just wanted to show me around, the new home that he had redesigned just for you and your taste in color and style, I realize I am biting my lip, and that drives him crazy, and I hope Katie does not notice, this was her thing too. But she seems absorbed in her transcription, to do so. 'Um... no, I didn't, just do that for her with him think it was for her not him and maybe be it was just for her- woo.' I flush up, to the thoughts of having 2 lovers running through my mind like a moon jet, in the sky going from mars to earth in less than a day.

'Oh, come on, Marry - even you can't be immune to his looks said Katie in my mind, I think she what to play with him using my mind also... ha and he loves it- it's a 3 way in the brain- of two young girls and one older man that can't do anything incorrectly.' I lost in thoughts of thinking of her, and she arches a perfect, for me with her soft warm body showing in soft light, in her and 'I's' room, also arching an eyebrow at me, as he is using me and my body as if she is me... you and she- and, not me- but she is overriding me... and my movements. 'I hear what you mean about formal sound, via you- she cute and young and what I want for fun. Did you take any notes on what I did here to make him ask for more?' she asks.

'That is fine, I said I well you mind to speech weighting, I know it is like shorthand- and glitchy yet I can get the notes I need on pleasing him- to the most. And my readers for work... all at the same time, I can still make a fine article with these thoughts on how to be right for a guy like him. Shame we do not have some unique calms, of how a man can be with 2 -16-year-old is these days without think of

marriage. Good-looking son of a bitch is not he, she said to me- blocking off his pathway in thought.'

'I suppose he is I love you though- yet but this way we can all be to gather, and no one gets it- and even so, it is a story, and what will they say, why care? We are okay with this, why not the world.' I try hard to sound disinterested- in only wanting one to love now and always, yet I cannot make up my mind to what I want, and I succeed at being a slut. 'You probably would have got a lot more out of him, if you would have to don't it like this- and she shows it in her thoughts to me- all sexy in her ways.'

'I doubt that Merry, Crappie! I said I distract her with flattery actions, always a good ploy, as I make her love me more, damn, she is inquisitive.

Think of something - quick, to make them both feel what the need, 'So what did you think of him, my mother gets on this now and asked?' I have like five voices in my crazy head rolling around. - he practically offered you a job, yes, I said- saying GET OFF- GET ME OFF- SAID KATTIE over and over, and the old lady downstairs was calling the police officers! Katie just loooovesss my mom... She glances up at me speculatively. I make a hasty retreat into the kitchen to get to the wall screen to call and say there are no issues here not to come, that just us playing around.

The girl officer looking now down on the whole run using the wall 4d tv screen that is cover, a fool to ceiling, was not impressed with us, to say the least- Come on Given that I foisted this on you at the last minute, you did very well.' This is

an override of safety and privacy- they have the right to do this even if nude/ or having sex/ or shoring the cum off your body/ in your own home... it is to be safe, they can record video and sound when they feel the need for the law.

Kattie snorts, at the dumb of how this all went down. Why can't she just let this go, and go back to playing with herself, as they all do in their indented force, of A-holes under their desks? What was that she said yah- sue me- she said, as the girlie cum runs down her leg as she yells get out of here, get out of my room, this is not right.

'She is very driven, controlling, arrogant - scary having this girl look all up and down me in her hologram inspection to see if we were okay or not, it is what they must do, to make sure you are not dying, they only send someone if you are already dead. I can understand the charm she is giving her for being in our room unwanted for an old ass that needs to kick,' I add truthfully, as I peer 'round the door of the bathroom, that I am now in, know that everything is seen thought and or glass in this home like them all, hoping this will shut her up finally, saying we just having girl on girl sex- God, go be somewhere else. I scowl at the memory of this the last time it happened. Can the old bitch just freak die, I said loudly? AWWWAH!

11

'You, fascinated by a girl? He said at first when you were 12.' I see first love...? I start gathering the makings of a sandwich, I am his yet living with her still, Incidentally, that was the most embarrassing question I have ever had too indoor. I

was embarrassed, of all the slideshow of what we did as kids be shown for all to see at his workplace, saying I was the one... and he was pissed to be asked if I was a virgin.'

Yes, you can see the dildo freaking of them at 12, here in this clip said the one man too eager- too eager. I would say so at 16 and into girls- one said, why here? That thought was the same in my mind also. Why Me...? 'Whenever she's was in the society pages, she never has a dated it said.' 'It was embarrassing nonetheless to see myself shown in that light and full color on the big screen in the boardrooms of the school and at his workplace- no privacy for a girl like me. The whole thing was embarrassing. I am glad I will never have to lay eyes on him again.' 'Oh, Merry, it cannot have been that bad, she said holding me in my bed crying over it all. He sounds quite taken with you, she said- and so did mom- like I was a baby all over again.' Taken with me...? Now Katie's being ridiculous about this too. I cried... 'Would you like another sandwich?'

'Please...' For a moment, I hesitate, and I have Mom's full attention.

'I'm fine.' 'No, Mom, it is nothing. You will be the first to know if I do.' 'Merry, you need to get out more, honey. You worry me.' I curl up in my white iron bed, wrapping my mother's quilt around me, and the one she made for me too, I close my eyes, and I instantly fall asleep. That night I dream of dark places, lost in the time of the pass with her and her blue eyes looking into mine.

~*~

By Monday and by the time I finish, it is midnight now Tuesday, and Katie has long since gone to bed. I made my way to my room, exhausted, but pleased that I've proficient so much for-a. We talked no more of RICHARD C. MAST that always there - that evening, much to my relief, all the arguing was over. Once we have eaten, she and I just crashed for some time, I am able to sit at the dining table with Katie and, while she works on her article, I work on my essay for school for lit. Damn, I hate this with a passion.

By Wednesday, she is much better, yet I am still in my PJs for Monday. For the rest of the week, I do even change them, or my sheets on the bed, why? I throw myself into my studies and my job of being whatever... however- whenever he wants it, however- whenever- why-ever and forever. I called my mom to check on her, for I was too mean, and so she could wish me luck for my final exams.

She worries about me.

Katie is busy too, compiling the last edition of her student magazine, which I am sure no one will read. Drama- drama- drama. It is a brief conversation with my mom before I want to rip my hair out. Later that evening, I call, my stepdad, that is dating a girl younger than me- just to see if he has not been kill by a terrorist, yet he is dating her so... yah. It is Friday night, Katie and I are debating what to do with our evening- we want some time out from student newspapers, our studies, and from our work.

‘That is amazing - congratulations, Katie said reviewing it in her mind!’

Delighted for him to be with her right, I hug him again in my mind and get off the line. Katie beams at him too, saying you could have had me. Why is it when I go out, I always feel trembly at the knees, heart-in-my-mouth, butterflies-in-my-belly, and come home with sleepless nights, yet even with her. Sometimes I wonder if there is something wrong with me. Do you think there is?

Why is he so interested in me, and not them it keeps going through my mind? I need more E-books- ‘Oh, you know, locked out of having too many. The usual... well, have to do-The classics. Of US literature, primarily.’ He rubs my chin with his long index finger, but it is mine, and thumb as he contemplates my answer to more stories under his name on my E-reader. Or he is just very bored and trying to hide it when I am reading too long- or he likes that too much about me. those fingers on that face are so enticing. ‘Anything else you need? Before I sign-off...’ ‘I don’t know- um- like- you to be in my life.’ What else would you recommend?’ You must find out what you want.

He smirks, and then he raises an eyebrow, amused, yet again, for crying over a dumb story. He nods, with wicked humor, and amusement with me being me. I flush, and my eyes stray from the text. I reply softly, and I know I am no longer screening gazing, what is coming out of my mouth, is frustration. ‘You wouldn’t want to ruin your clothing, by not washing them.’ I gesture, ambiguously in the direction of the overstuffed washer- surging my shoulder’s. ‘I could always take them off- I said.’ ‘Cute’ what his thought...?

‘Um...’ I feel the color of pink in my cheeks increasing yet another time. I must be the color of the communist manifesto. Stop talking. Stop talking NOW. Heaven forbids I should ruin any clothing, that you got for me,’ he says matter-of-factly. He ignores my inquiry of me rolling my eyes to that too. ‘How’s the article coming along?’ He knows yet still questions me about it. I try and dismiss the unwelcome image of him without his underwear on.

I grasp it tightly with two hands like I was holding his, and I go for honesty, about my feelings. ‘Do you need anything else?’ He has finally asked me a normal question about us, and he starts doing cute things like only he can, the confusing of double talk... with Katie is a question I can answer, of the fact I love him now more than her.

-Raises an eyebrow, I investigate my mind to feel all of him.

‘I am not writing it, Katie is, My roommate, she is the writer. She is incredibly happy with it. She is the editor of the magazine, and she was devastated that she could not interview in person.’ I feel like I have come up for air - at last, a normal topic of conversation. ‘Her only concern is that she doesn’t have any original photographs of you.’

‘What sort of photographs does she want?’

Okay I said, I had not factored in this response. I shake my head because I just do not know how to say to her that I want her to back off, yet she is the one making me look to the world. Tomorrow, perhaps... I will come out and say it' he trails off the line.

'I want you to do a photoshoot naked for me?' My voice is squeaky again, and I said yes for the world to see and for me to love you more. He said, Katie, will be in seventh heaven when she sees me like this if I can pull this off. And you might see him again tomorrow, that dark place at the base of my brain whispers seductively at me. I dismiss the thought - of all the sill-y-ness, ridiculous... whys I going to be spared open on the screens for all to see my goodies.

'Katie will be delighted if we can find a photographer, that wants a successful conclusion like I do- ha with us all.' I am so pleased, I smile at him broadly, with the outcome of all the shots. He has taken a sharp intake of breath, not remembering to let it out, for some time, and he blinks over and over to say she is all mine. For a fraction of a second, I was wondering what, and then it turned out to be sweet, he looks lost somehow, and the Earth shifts slightly on its axis, the tectonic plates sliding into a new position.

'Let me know about tomorrow if you want to go around the world with me.' Reaching into his back pocket, he pulls out his wallet, and sees. 'My card with his to do just that. It has my number on it, of getting out of the country, and back in... You

will need to call before ten in the morning if you want to do this.’ ‘Okay.’ I grind at him. Katie is going to be thrilled, for me.

So, we did...

‘It was a pleasure to burn, burn all the words of the ones that, though they knew it all-to make others feel the same, all that was known as wisdom... now the question shows in the people before me if they are wise or not.’

Like, I cannot tear my eyes away, for him all of him looking down then back up, from his inquiry; and I gaze blindly, down at my tired fingers. I swallow too hard... His mouth is very... distracting with those lips, hair, and eyes. It is just so right even if it is wrong.

‘I want to know about you... That is only fair.’ I lean forward to retrieve the recorder it all the good stuff- for I was not- hearing the words- lost in his charm- yet I must author the paper. He places his elbow on the arms of the chair, with his fingers in front of his mouth rubbing his lower lip, as if it were mine. I knew his thoughts, at the time, were all about impressing me. I curl up in my white iron bed, wrapping my mother's quilt around me, close my eyes, and I am instantly asleep. That night I dream of dark places, bleak white cold floors, and gray eyes.

~*~

For the rest of the week, I throw myself into my studies and my job. Katie is busy too, compiling the last edition of her student magazine before she must relinquish

it to the new editor while also cramming for her finals. By Wednesday, she is much better, and I no longer must endure the sight of her pink-flannel-with too-many rabbits PJs.

I call my mom to check on her, but also so she can wish me luck for my final exams. She proceeds to tell me about her latest venture into candle making - my mother is all about new business ventures. Fundamentally she is bored and wants something to occupy her time, but she has the attention span of a goldfish. It will be something new next week. She worries me, and I worry about her you see. 'How are things with you, Merry?'

One week has passed, and I am sitting in his office. For the moment, I hesitate, and I have his full attention, lost in his eyes. 'I'm fine I said.' 'Have you met someone, a man I mean?' Why do you ask? Wow... I thought... red rushing feeling coming up my neck. How does she do that the excitement in her voice is palpable? I have a crush on the boss, 'really my mom said- a boy?' 'Mom, it's nothing really- just some hot-shot.' 'Like- you will be the first to know, like- if I do- more then I should.' Why sex already? NO! I just encountered this man, I not going to be all hot and heavy already... 'Make baby's she said...' I want to shit myself!

Why does he have such an unnerving effect on me I asked my Ma? His overwhelming good looks the way his eyes blaze at me. The way he strokes his index finger against his lower lip, I wish he would stop doing that. My heart is pounding.

The elevator arrives on the first floor, and I scramble out as soon as the doors slide open, stumbling once, but fortunately not sprawling on to the immaculate sandstone floor. I race for the wide glass doors, and I am free in the bracing, cleansing, damp air of New York. Raising my face, I welcome the cool refreshing rain. I close my eyes and take a deep, purifying breath, trying to recover what is left of my equilibrium.

‘You sound like a control freak.’ The words are out of my mouth before I can stop them. ‘Oh, I exercise control in all things, Miss,’ he says without a trace of humor in his smile. I look at him, and he holds my gaze steadily, impassive. My heartbeat quickens, and my face flushes again. ‘Do you feel that you have immense power?’ Control Freak.

‘Oh. I will bear that in mind,’ I murmur, completely confounded, that she thinks I am good enough. ‘Though I’m not sure I’d fit in with his type I said.’ Oh no, not at all like what I see him with, I am musing aloud again. ‘Would you like me to show you around?’ He asks me this... ‘I’m sure you’re far too busy, RICHARD C. MAST- Mr. Morgan, and I do have a long drive.’ ‘You’re driving back in a week?’ she sounds surprised, anxious even that I may have hooked this man- in the least. I glance out of the window, running the day and him in my mind.

It has begun to rain hard. ‘Well, you’d better drive carefully.’ His tone is stern, authoritative. Why should he care?’ Did you get everything you need?’ He adds... I remember his saying that ‘The pleasures have been all his well it was all

mine- nothing but pleasure,’ he is so polite as ever, to me makes me feel good about me being, a loser, and a freak in every way that sucks like a girl. I drop my phone into my school bag and call it a night. My eyes narrow, on the paper, I had to write.

‘Thank you for the interview, RICHARD C. MAST Morgan was not a good ending to me; yet me saying, I had one that was happy was not good either.’ Crap...! As I rise and stands and holds out his hand to my teacher that was a dick about the fact I could write. Here is your paper I said... the man was lackluster about my attempts at wooing him.

‘Do you want the FREAKing thing or not- because- like Katie, I could be home now- play with it! The whole class knew that this girl had- an oversexed issue of Doing the two-finger salute nonstop in class, so there are busting out... about it being okay for her and not me- they all know what happened its showing on the walls. ‘Yes- if you feel that I need to see it...’ ‘Like- that’s why I did it- dick-suck!’ I did not say it out loud- yet it was heard in his mind to his... and theirs.’ ‘Just ensuring you make it through the door, Miss to blush and feel like complete crap.’ He gives me a small smile, saying decent work here. Thanks, I say running for freedom! He is referring to my love life, more than the paper, as I run for the office. I flush up... with all of them chasing behind me, playing freak you hard in the brain it is a game to them of back and forth.

~*~

“Tell the moment I see you once more Miss.’ You are testing me, here...or a threat, I am not sure which what it is- yet. I frowned slightly. When will we ever meet again, it was asked, so-o I shake his hand once more like before, I was surprised that the strange current among us is still there?

It must be my nerves, I said and felt. ‘RICHARD C. MAST I said thanks for your time.’ I nodded at him. Moving with nimble sporty elegance to the door, he opens it wide for me to walk through. ‘Did you have a coat?’ He asked, and the moment passed too slow yet too fast.

‘That’s so nice of you do that, him- the- RICHARD C. MAST- this man I am lusting for,’ I snap, in my moment, and his smile widens at me. I am glad you find me pleasurable, that is my joy in life having and give just that, I look angrily inwardly, walking into the entrance hall. I am astonished when he follows me out, asking for more time with me another time. I- Marry and then Olivia we both look up, likewise taken back by him asking for a date night.

‘Yes.’ Olivia leaps up and retrieves my jacket, which - takes from her before she can hand it to me. He holds it up and, feeling ridiculously self-conscious, I shrug it on. They are not all that much here for you to know about, or for me to say you need to know, I find myself flushing up yet again with him looking at me he does.

‘What are your plans after you graduate? You do not remember? I questioned, no I just wanted to see if you are disciplined as I with saying repartition- in your speeches.’ I hope to find work with someone like you have a man that is like

you, and life and some city where I can start anew, like New York. That is if I pass all my classes and get out of the school, yet this is my final that is holding me back from getting away.

I have not made any plans- I thought about quitting, yet my mother would not hear of it, so I am here, and Kite is doing what I want to be right now. ‘Gross!’ So, in saying all of that I conclude that you have not made any? Right, I said shakenly... I just need to get through my final exams if I can, yet you have the say in this. ‘Why do you say that...?’

I see that he turns his head to the one side, fascinated, a hint of a faint smile playing on his lips. I hope that he did not notice my reaction, he gives nothing away, with the look that he is giving me. ‘It's obvious, isn't it- that I have fallen to his charms?’ I am clumsy, unkempt, and I am not blonde, not his type at all.

~*~

He places his hands for a moment on my lower backside. I gasp at his soft touch, his long index finger presses the button summoning the elevator, and we stand to wait - awkwardly on my part, coolly self-possessed on his.

The doors opened, and I hurried desperately to escape. I need to get out of here. When I turn to look at him, he is leaning against the doorway beside the elevator with one hand on the wall. He is very, very good-looking. It is distracting. His burning gray eyes gaze at me. ‘Merry,’ he says as a farewell.

‘Chiaz,’ I reply. And mercifully, the doors close. No man has ever affected me the way Chiaz has, and I cannot fathom why. Is it his looks that he gives me, that I feel this power over me that I cannot control His Wealth also blows my mind, the power I do not understand my unreasonable reaction?

I breathe an enormous sigh of relief. What in heaven's name was that all about... Leaning against one of the stone pillars of the building, I intrepidly try to calm down and gather my thoughts. I shake my head. Holy crap, I said - what was that...?

My heart steadies to its regular rhythm, and I can breathe normally again. I head for the car.

He may be conceited- I am falling to it, but then he has a right to be - he is skillful so-o much at such an undeveloped time of life. He does not agonize boobs gladly, but why should he, o'er, I am irritated that Katie did not give me a brief profile on all this- shit stuff. An involuntary shiver runs down my spine. And Katie's questions are rushing through my head or did you or did not you have hookup sex, it was not about getting the job- oh now in today's light it is all about the sex and the money to buy anything or anyone. - ugh, I said to her- well you saw it play out did not you know it happened!

He kept my underwear- I know she said... sweet...! I shudder at the remembering swallowing him sucking him off and that too I showed and then galloped, then it ended with him kissing my body all over softly. I cannot believe I said that to

her, yet she saw it sliding in me too- they all did, with this new type of video calling we have- you can see through others... like being there without being there. As I leave the city limits behind, the building behind, and move pasted I begin to feel foolish and embarrassed as I replay the interview in my mind. Surely, I am overreacting to something imaginary.

Okay, so he is extremely attractive, confident, commanding, at ease with himself - but on the other side, he is arrogant, and for all his impeccable manners, he is autocratic and cold. Well, on the surface.

While cruising along down the highway, my mind continues to ponder the facts of what I have done slow long hard, and yet slow, THE FREAKING WAS INSPIRATION. LIP BITING, BOOB GRABBING, NIPPLE AND SUCKING CLIT LICKING SEX, AND FOREPLAY- DEEP FINGERING LOVE'N SEX. POUNDING! SWEETING- OMG MOMENTS OF GOING OFF OVER AND OVER, WITH HIM UNDER ME!

YOU CAN SEE me AND THE SHOT IN YOUR MIND RIDING HIM FROM WITH MY BUT GOING UP AND DOWN- SLIDING- GLADDING- FEELING ME IN- COMPLETELY! AH! HE IS EVERYTHING I NEED TO MAKE IT IN THIS LIFE- I WANT IT EVEN IF I HURT THE FIRST TIME! 'The sun burnt every day. Yet it burnt away like with old ways and time. I looked up-to-the skies and thought about the ways of life.'

Truly puzzled by all that went down in me, I need this feeling and feelings to succeed in this life as a woman. A woman is nothing without her man- a man that so perfect as he is... under her. Some of his replies were so obscure, yet I loved the mystery of it all - as if he had a hidden agenda. me up now! Consistently I think of that inquiry in the future, I will cringe with blushing. Damn Katie, for not wanting me- now I must want him always!

Did I question my racing thoughts- like have you ever watched the jet cars race on the boulevard? They now drive themselves crazy to think that some used to do just that drive by hand. I sometimes think drivers do not know what grass is, or flowers, because they never-ever see them gradually... If you showed a driver a blue blur, Oh affirmatively! A blur flashing before my eyes like him naked in my mind- and Katie spared eagle last night in my face wanting me to go down- that butt is unforgettable! What can you do, all girls today are Bi? Right? It is all part of not being wed... and even so that just a piece of paper stating someone owns you, and you lose have of what you worked for- so why do it?

I check the speedometer and see 300 mph. I am driving more cautiously than I would on any other occasion. And I know it is the memory of two penetrating it is his eyes gazing soft and sweet at me his nude body ribbing over mine, and his stern voice telling me to FREAK him, harder and harder, I want to... as the car is driving carefully fast around all the others whizzing by. Pulling at my hearing and biting my lip I go off c*mming, in just the thoughts, I realize that he is more like a man double his age, like my dad- yet I want the challenging work out of a FREAK! Squeezed tight,

body and me holding him in me... and the spraying finally takes places over and over like 30 times, switching ways of doing it- up down and sideways and more. He came to me to not pulling out one's... is that love or not caring, I do not have to care to evert there is stopped, so I do not have to worry?

Freak and be freaked in the game of life... and do not think- about it!

Freaked under over and above that is it how I do it person- and they love me for it... and make you be someone... that advice to live by... said, Katie. I was 10 when I found that girl- like you all virgin and shy... how did you get as far as you did, she said that a week ago back, well, she was right... I did need to go a little crazy... yet I may have fallen in love with it... and that not how the thing works today either. Yet that is just me- old fashioned thinking.

Be unable to remember everything blacking out in the heated moments of sex... Merry, I scold myself... snapping out of it, I decided that overall, it has been a remarkably interesting experience, but I should not abide by it. Put it behind you. I never have to see him again. I am immediately cheered by the thought. I switch on the small ear head and player and turn the volume up loud blasting pop music, I sit back in the car as it races for my apartment where I have to then take the trail that winds up the side of the skyscraper- leading up to my room or that floor, and listen to thumping music, as I make my lover parts do the same- think about him well doing myself, as I press down on the accelerator to my sleeping room, was Kittie is looking for to cuddling with me- she and I share a bed it all we can adore- making less than a dollar a day- and need 100 just to live.

As I hit 1-5, I realize I can drive as fast as I want.

We live in a small community of duplex apartments in- Vancouver, Washington, close to the NYU campus. I am fluky -Katie's parents bought the place for her, and I pay peanuts for rent. It has been home for four years now. As I pull up outside, I know

Katie is going to want a blow-by-blow account, and she is tenacious. Well, at least she has the mini-disc. Hopefully, I will not have to elaborate much beyond what was said during the interview.

'Merry! You are back.' Katie sits in our and you are with me cheaters-you said to me said- yes but all that? Why not? I see... okay, she said, surrounded the movie she was crying over not having me there for her to feel loved. She loves me yet she does not want to be in love with me- I wonder why?

She has been studying for finals - though she is still in her pink flannel pajamas decorated with cute little bunnies, that were mine, the ones she reserves for the aftermath of breaking up with her, for not want girl on girl sex as much as she wanted it, and for general moody depression of being- bitchy. She bounds me up and hugs me hard and slides them off asking me to do what I did with him on her.

To lick and stick... and feel and play with her vulva, squeeze me, and play with my nipples... she said- well she was ou-yah-ing- as I was giving her there in oral, looking for to having it back.

I was beginning to worry, that he was looking into my mind and seeing this... and me doing just this with her... am- I do not wrong?

I expected you back sooner, she said grunting it out of her, everything for the last drop was a trusting spray of her feel whipped out yet happy with everything down there.' thank you so much for doing this, I said to her, have it cum, yet not feel like I did in the past. I owe you; I know.

'How was it.'

'Good...' I said- 'What was he like?' Oh, you did not feel inside you where you were looking down at me without asking to be there... you are not my girl... you do not need to be here... I know you got off with us... why? Do you want me?

Yes!

Now and always- she said.

I want him now, not you... do not blow it for me... I struggle to answer her question, of what I wanted, can I have both... I thought she giggled... see therefore I love you. What can I say? I will always be here for you- like this- yes like this I said- you are such a baby I must be. Young, to be doing that with a man... 'I no...' Katie gazes at me arched eyebrows looking sad. I frown at her, saying you are always my first love. Hug me... 'I am glad it is over, and I do not have to see him again, I must, to make it in this life... wink. He was intimidating, you know.' I shrug at the thoughts of want more... of both in a loving way 'He's extremely focused, intense even - and

young... a boy... yet not 'you,' I said- but I will go there. I thought you did it all great... interview and such all also, in the end, it was about you have a 10-figure job someday. And you will have it, BUT would you give that all up for me and have 'nothing' but for me- and be with me? That is the question I have for you- do you love me?

13

(Forward)

'Merry, hi, it's so good to see you, back she said- that being Katie!' She grins as he examines me at arm's length. Then he releases me but keeps a possessive arm draped over my shoulder. I shuffle from foot to foot, embarrassed by what I have done. She gushes with loving hugs. So how was it? I to pooped to say... and she passed out in her arms- falling in the doorways- that sild opens for her. 'Yep, you're looking well, Merry, really well- I see the glow in your face of what all that you two did.'

I can hardly breathe. When I glance up at RICHARD C. MAST - he is watching us like a warmonger, his blue eyes hooded and speculative, his mouth a hard-impassive line. Hurriedly, I place his purchases in a plastic carrier. Someone you should meet,' I say, trying to defuse the antagonism I see in-'s eyes. He is changed from the weirdly attentive customer to someone else- someone cold and distant. The atmosphere is suddenly chilly, and the fire hot, glowing and shining on her skin... she

is truly feeling loved- and in love with him and her too. I nod, rendered speechless yet again, and handed back his credit card, if he loves me then I will spend- spend- spend!

There, I have admitted to myself, I love him for the money I get and feel good, about him making me feel good- good. 'Until tomorrow perhaps where I will be long for her yet once more- right?' He turns to leave, then pauses, asking me for more of what he loves of me the most, 'your ass,' said Katie- 'No my Puss!' I said back. his coming here, tonight to see me- so you need to- well 'get lost' yes... if you do not mind.

'Fine...'

'Oh, and Marry Sue I just want to F*CK you, I read of the card to the flowers he got me- cute Katie said... reading it to using my eyes, yet her thoughts. But it is a lost cause, I have fallen to his ways, I know, and I sighed hard, with nostalgic regret, it was just a coincidence, she smiles looking at me say it all it must be young love, Okay- I like him like- like- like...? Closing the door by asking it to do just that, I spend several minutes staring into space, I cannot hide from myself my feelings anymore.

(Home)

Katie is ecstatic after she does it yourself time... 'DIY baby D-I-Y!'

I bite my lip in anticipation and find myself grinning like a schoolchild, at the looks of her playing, her curiosity oozes through me too, with what she was just 2.

0 is what. (BUTT plug) I have never felt like this before, where I just need sleep. She more than I and she stayed home all week, yet have so much to do- papers, and stocking shelves, I find him attractive lost in my thoughts in my awareness, extremely attractive... M-mm-mm I said, softly, I can admire him from in here and it safe, surely? No harm, by doing just so-o. And if I find a photographer, I can do some serious admiring tomorrow. I need to phone Katie and organize a photoshoot.

(Work)

I am in the depths of the stock room, I walk out holding what the little girl gave me of hers to get the same type, yes, getting underwear to little girls, is my dream job, trying to keep my voice casual- well look at these sweet little faces standing there, well standing there... (pee covered undies in my hands) with this in my butt hole. I thought this is what she must look forward to. 'That is one huge coincidence, Merry, he said looking for the size as I say OOOO-ah 'poopy.' And the little girl asked, from afar- what I was making out my myself- when too much time had passed. it is a short-lived joy when she was blurting out, I want the underwire that you took off me. I mutter you want kids...

'Sure...'

Like this one, he said... being comical about it.

He does not I want to be with you, Katie said- saying kidnap this one!

PLEASE- too cute...!

You do not think he was there to see you; I walk down the hall of my school and see him standing at the end looking at me with his lusting blue eyes, wanting to cover me with kisses.’ she speculates, Katie about how he going to take me away... even as just a schoolgirl- ‘How do you know this?’ ‘Merry, I am a journalist, and I have written a profile on the guy. I know that man has the power of girls to do whatever it is they want too... the kids were talking about us... me being young and his little slut as they call me, yet I do not care I have him- isn’t that all I need?’

The question is, who is here to see some dumb girls were thinking in the dark, think they could be the next in his bed, going to do them and where and when.’

‘We could ask him why- and where and how but would he- say said to the brown-haired girl, over yonder. He says he is staying the day with- ‘THAT GIRL.’’ ‘You can contact him, all the time? ...on nosey on said to me.’ ‘I have his wrist phone number here all the time if I need it, they don’t get how he inside me always.’

Katie gasps... by the lies I must make up to look innocent to all, even though I know, I have taken it at least 1,000 times, holy c-u-m, at the end of my joiner year.

‘The richest, most elusive, I have taken was sex-ed, with this man as an after-school program, most here are working for what he calls righting class, most enigmatic unmarried person, or hairstyles, or seen to be housewife’s ‘Er... yes.’ ‘Merry is not going to be one of those! He likes you, said the short girl in the room, no

doubt about it, said the other with long blond-haired person flowing hair and green eyes.’ Her tone was emphatic when he said let us go into town and get you out of here. ‘Katie, he’s just trying to be nice.’ But she was pouting about it, that I was not going to be there all day to hold her hand. ‘Great idea! I spoke.

(A thought of now)

He said he was glad Katie did not do the interview, that we would have never met.

(Thought)

But even as I say the words, I love you I must feel it right? That the sex said Katie, and you will know. I know they are not true- all the nasty things said by all the mean girls- RICHARD C. MAST- does not do nice, or wonderful thing for girls,’ like me- things like this if it is not love- fist.

(Back)

-And-

A small quiet voice whispers saying they all just want to be for you are the best one out of them all, do not forget it, perhaps- he is right. I hug myself with quiet glee, rocking from side to side, holding him in my mind, like a dream, I see all this... entertaining the possibility that he might like me for one brief moment- for always. Katie brings me back to the now and happening by saying your zipper is down... (zip) and her hands are on my vagina.

‘Merry, you are the one with the relationship. What is it like to be with a boy said the girl lunch? That sits with her day in and day out not saying much.’

‘Relationship?’ I squeak at her, my voice rising several octaves. ‘I barely know the guy.’ Yet it is something you just must do to get it. So, is it true? What I said to her... you are with him... and do things... ‘Yeah, um, sorry,’ I mutter, turning to leave. I cannot say- what we do or do not do- it is confidential.

‘So, how come you know: The RICHARD C. MAST?’ Cass’s voice is unconvincingly nonchalant and wants to know it all.

This is when Katie speaks up saying everything and anything along with saying she needs to get laid- I give an odd look- when she said- ‘I had to interview him for our student newspaper today and I said- ‘you did the editing.’ So, you can move forward, Katie was not well- she all is dripping from somewhere ha.’ I shrug my shoulder, trying to sound casual with all the girls looking at me like I am a whore, yet not doing no- better than them- in their twisted little minds. She shakes her head as if to clear it all away.’ Anyway, want to grab a drink or something and chat some over there?’ Away from this gossip? ‘Sure...’ is what I said. I am staring out of the window at the sun coming up and showing the first signs of light. Katie grabs the handset from me, tossing her silky-smooth reddish-blonde hair over her shoulder.

You like him, a chant started with all the girls! I have never seen or heard so, so... many girls care- about anyone before. You are blushing.’ Said Katie... ‘Oh Katie, you know I blush all the time, I said quickly... She blinks over and over fast, at me

with surprise that I did not move or reacted to this taunting. 'I just find him... intimidating, that's all, and he's acting cool for me right now- or I am sure, I would have run out.'

'I love you' is what he said over and over... overtop all the haters.

(Home from HIGH school)

I am restless that night, I punch my pillow and try to settle, tossing and turning, after a short cat nap, yet I wake twice. Dreaming of him and those eyes and oh...! That body, long legs, long fingers, and dark hair and soft skin..., 'I need to study, then I'll make supper.' I cannot hide my irritation with her for going too far with him, as I open one of the cubbyholes under our bed, I read a love note of dream of him, I do this while she is making supper. In the night- holding her, my heart pounding, knowing what is going on two girls on man- who does he love more?

15

Free of charge for the morning in exchange for a credit in the article, said Katie, I do this for the love by you. When she- explains at the reception that I have writing yet bad- spelling, she said to-RICHARD C. MAST - RICHARD C. MAST, we are instantly upgraded have her on our time- yes? She is terribly young and extremely nervous for some reason, yet if you want to have this way then if he said, it is fine. We have half an hour to set up, for the day out, Katie is in full flow, working on her work and not going to school... funny how life works...? I thought...

5 P. M

My mouth goes dry looking at him... he is so freaking hot. Holy Crap He is wearing a white shirt, open at the collar, and - dress pants, I disruptive hair is still damp from a shower, for what took place after the school day was at its end. His eyes watch me impassively. He then extends his hand, 'Thank you for taking the time to do this.' ...and I shake it like I am one of his men on the job, blinking rapidly, to see if anyone see us out and bout, Oh my... I thought, he really is, quite... is he liking her more now- wow?

As I touch his hand, I am aware of that delicious current running right through me, lighting me up, making me blush, and I am sure my erratic breathing must be audible. Katie who comes forward, looking him squarely in the eye, said I am coming on this date tonight. How do you do?' He said- to her kissing her hand and her ass all at the same damn time... He gives her a small smile, looking genuinely amused, as to what was under the dress.

I remind myself that Katie has been to the best private schools. 'I trust you're feeling better?' 'Yes, yes I do...' 'I am fine, also running it into his head fist that he ALL MINE! She shakes his hand firmly, AND HE HUGES HER NOT ME! SHIT! without batting an eyelid, HOLD ON TO HIS ARM.

Backstory- Her family has like no money, and she is grown up confident, about her ass and how to use it at an early age, and I am sure of her place in the world- is sitting at home diddling no more. She does not take any crap, so why him? I am in

awe of her, for trying to break us up, so-o she has all of me back- I can see through her plans. She gives him a polite, professional smile like a gay girl would.

‘It’s a pleasure,’ he answers, that is all it is about with me and find it, turning his gaze on me, and I flush up again, feeling-

lovesick, damn it why when I have this, I feel I going to lose it...? ‘Where would you like me?’ - Asks him. His tone sounds vaguely threatening. But Katie is not about to let me run the show for five. My wish has come true: she said, I can stand next to you, and admire you and not - from not-so-afar. Twice of my eyes lock deeper into her, and I must tear myself away from his cloudy gaze, of wanting to freak the shit out of her.

(Bar)

‘He stands, Katie wades in again. ‘Enough sitting.’ I removed the chair, for some slow dancing. ‘Great,’ says Katie, I find a bonnier to bang down- when a fast song comes on... ‘Thank you again, Mr. for your time. He said- ‘I look forward to reading the article that you re-told, Miss Katie,’ he murmurs in a sexy way. As I-Merry- pull him to dance. ‘Sure,’ I say, completely thrown, yet I do not need him doing the same. I glance anxiously at Katie, who shrugs at me. Yelling has fun, as she finds her way over to the wall to be a flower. My heart slams, my mouth dry and my lower-ness not so-o much.

Yet am I in love?

-Or is it all just dumb freaking lust, or just freaking?

16

A date? RICHARD C. MAST - is asking me on a date tonight I said to- my girlfriend Katie. He is asking if you want a coffee, this was said to me I see it in my memory of the day that just passed. He thinks you have not woken up yet- to see that it was all not a dream that he is falling for her, my subconscious whines at me in sneering in my mood again. I clear my throat trying to control my nerves, yet I cannot.

Katie- this man said- 'Are they based at the university?'

Know I live with her- he looked at me oddly, about saying that. The other couple with us asked, their names escape' me, yet I could dig it up if I wanted too, his voice was soft, a young businessperson that was part of the team higher up and inquiring. I nod, too stunned to speak, Taylor was his name, I found the clip to look at it and think about all the things that were said so fast I could not evoke them all.

'Mr. Taylor, as he asks me if I want a drink- sure is what I said, and a dace- and I said- 'yes,' but my mind was on him- yet- this man reached for me, and I have to say yes, I was obligated, giving nothing away, about how I feel. I look at him like there was magic in my eyes yet there was not. But he was sweet so... yah.

He smiles at me, and it is a dazzling one, unguarded he said- to me, I said Nah drop out- natural he said, all-teeth-showing, glorious smile, of college?

No high school... Oh, my... he said. I scoot around him to enter the bathroom, where I find Marry deep discussion with him- they were in a stall together getting it on.

‘Merry, he likes you, I said as the pants were at their feet.’ Be sure to be a condom- ha you can go now- she said fast. ‘But I don’t trust him, you know that’ she adds. I raise my hand in the hope, it hits her in the face, that she will stop dirty talking. By some miracle, it does. Her mouth pops open and it slides in. Speechless Katie is! I savored the moment, seeing I was so happy for her. I love her, yet I want her to be happy you see.

(160 long seconds have passed)

She purses her lips as if considering my request. Finally, she fishes for him. She grabs me by my arm, holding the door open some say get in here, be with him too now, and drags me into the bedroom where it goes down fixed, that is off the living area of the suite, in this ice bar in New York.

Her tone is full of warning.

At the elevators, he presses the call button, and the bell rings almost immediately. The doors slide open revealing a young couple in a passionate clinch inside.

Merry- there is something about him, that is just driving me crazy- lost in thoughts... and feelings- of what could be.

‘He is gorgeous, I agree, but he is dangerous. Especially to someone like you. She said...’ ‘What do you mean, someone like me?’ I demand, affronted. ‘An innocent like you, Merry. You know what I mean,’ she says a little maddened.

I flush up turning pink. I am starting my exams this week, and I need to study, so I will not be long- it is time to go ‘like now’ I said hurriedly.’ Fixing up as a young girl walks in, asking if everything was cool.

17

‘Katie- it is just coffee, I said to Merry- he said- I want to take you out what do you say he said to me. And... he looked at me with wonder...

He grins at me with hope in the eyes of a night that he would not forget all given by me I sure, and with his money, I was sure to do whatever he wanted. It is now tomorrow and at night- ‘I will see you later, then... yes most defiantly. Do not belong, I said to her... or I will send out search and rescue.’ ‘Thanks.’ I hug her, I with your boys so you know him he will be right to me... I was so pissed, why her... yet is that okay?

He stands up straight, holding his hand out for me to go first, were had a date with a horse drawing carriage, all white, and nice and romantic at dusk.

Where he held my hand and whispered sweet nothings in my ear. Holding me over so nicely..., I flushed beet red. ‘Okay, let us do coffee, here and it was the best restart in town... and the classiest- the name in French so yah see for yourself.’ In

my eyes, it was Queue weed I said yet that was without glasses on. That was something a failed like- in high school.

I emerge from the suite to find RICHARD C. MAST - waiting, leaning up against the wall, looking like a male model in a pose for some glossy high-end magazine.

Merry- after being with him all do, I am pooped, I murmur I make my way down the corridor, my knees shaky, my stomach full of butterflies, and my heart in my mouth thumping a dramatic uneven beat. I am going to have coffee with RICHARD C. MAST, and I hate coffee... but- she ran off with my man!

‘Sucking tit shit!’ I spoke!

We walk together down the wide hotel corridor to the elevators. What should I say to him? My mind is suddenly paralyzed with apprehension. What are we going to talk about? What on Earth do I have in common with him? His soft, warm voice startles me from my reverie. I REMEMBER BACK- OF The doors opening and, much to my surprise, - takes my hand, clasping it with his long cool fingers. I feel the current running through me, and my already rapid heartbeat hurries. As he leads me out of the elevator kissing my neck and lips softly, we can hear the suppressed giggles of the couple erupting behind us. - grins from all around, yet we did not care it was lusty love.

‘How long have you known Marry - Katie Oh, an easy question for starters... I thought... ‘Since our 1st year of schooling. She is a good friend of mine, do not break her heart.’ Why don’t you say anything but look at this- wow?

I am struggling to maintain a straight face, so I gaze down at the floor, feeling my cheeks turning pink. Surprised and embarrassed, by the fact I thought it was for me I was like shit, I started to feel guilty. Then, I step into the elevator, feeling like I want to be her.

‘What is it about elevators?’ he mutters, thoughts of true love... about her. When I peek up at them using my mind phone to see into their thoughts - through my lashes and their eyes, he has a hint of a smile on his lips of what he plans to give me, but it is extremely hard to tell if he is being real about it.

As a young couple, I say nothing, and have nothing in that say anyway- and we travel down to the first floor, all in the same body’s- me as Katie is embarrassed silence-less for she in me full.

18

Katie- Outside, it is a mild May on a Sunday. The sun is- shining and the traffic is light. - turn left and stroll to the corner, where we stop waiting for the lights at the pedestrian crossing to change. He is still holding my hand. I am in the street, and RICHARD C. MAST - is holding my hand. We cross the expansive, bustling lobby of the hotel toward the entrance but - avoids the revolving door, and I wonder if that is because he would have to let go of my hand.

I attempt to smother the ridiculous grin that threatens to split my face in two. I feel giddy, and I tingle all over... for the good buy sex, yet we wanted each other- badly- no one has ever held my hand. Try to be cool, Merry, my subconscious implores me. The green man appears, and we are off again.

‘I’ll have... um - Breakfast with tea, bag out, talking about all that to over the fact he was to spend his life with her as me being his sideways bitch out the side and you know what I’m okay with that.’ He raises his eyebrows.

‘Why do not you choose a table, while I get the drinks. What would you like?’ he asks, polite as ever. We walk four blocks before we reach the NY Coffee House, where - releases me to hold the door open so I can step inside. ‘The coffee was good? Cram-y like I was for him... at midnight.’ ‘I’m not keen on coffee, yet I like this.’

His smiles- OH MY GOD! For a moment, I am stunned, thinking it is a blandishment, but fortunately my unconscious kicks in with pursed lips. As I lay naked on his bed in the hotel room that he owns- I stare down at my knotted fingers, think about how I the other girl.

‘Anything to eat?’ I surreptitiously gaze at him from beneath, and my lashes point upward at him as he stands there looking down at me with low light on and the skyline in the background flicking lights, of tall buildings, I could watch him all, think about how I was not sleep with her tonight.

‘Sure...?’

‘...It was quiet in my mind because...’

I bite my lip and stare down at my hands again not liking where my wayward thoughts are headed. ‘No thank you.’ I shake my head to see him coming at me, and he heads for me.

Do I want this I thought? Oh, my hips, once or twice he runs his long, graceful fingers through, he is tall, broad-shouldered- and slim those pants hang from his ankles... and the way his now dry but still disorderly hair, sheens in the light is so right, I just oozing for his love. So, yah wet- hmm... I would like to do that to you he said- and my mouth doped with it. The thought comes unbidden into my mind and my face flames.

‘Penny for your thoughts, dollars for hardcore freaking?’ Yes, sign me up...! For his love...! I go crimson when the hood is pulled back by his fingers. Flaking and liking- and then sticking- ‘OH MY GOD - Freak-ING- YES!!’

‘Get down with your bad self!’

I spoke! In my thoughts... running my fingers through your hair, his going down in me, I was just thinking about and wondering if it would feel soft to touch like this always, I shake my head from the c*mming hard, and being fast, and faster yet, and over and over. my favorite part- and part of the day, I said to him- letting out a big breath.

(Moring)

I curl up, desperately clutching the flat foil balloon and Taylor's handkerchief, and surrender myself to my grief. I fall onto my bed, shoes and all, and howl. The pain is indescribable... physical, mental... metaphysical... it is everywhere, seeping into the marrow of my bones. Grief. This is grief - and I have brought it to myself. Deep down, a nasty, unbidden thought comes from my inner goddess, her lip curled in a snarl... the physical pain from the bite of a belt is nothing, nothing compared to this devastation.

How do they do that?

The room is so nice, all fancy, he is carrying a platter, which he sets down on the small, round, birch-veneer table. He hands me a cup and saucer, a small teapot, and a side plate bearing alone teabag labeled Breakfast' -He has a coffee which bears a wonderful leaf-pattern engraved in milk.

I wonder idly in my mind for some time. 'Your thoughts on all this?' He prompts me when I look into his eyes. He is also bought himself a blueberry muffin, with lots of sugar on top.

Putting the tray aside, to kiss me all over even if it was all sticky like the hammer on an Underwood typewriter, he sits opposite me and crosses his long legs. Cover between my legs with soft sweet kissing, He looks so comfortable, up to me, so at ease with his body, I envy him, for I am not like that at all. Here is me, all gawky and awkward, barely able to get started to end without falling flat on my face- 'I am selfish, impatient and a little insecure. I make mistakes, I am out of control and at

times hard to handle. But if you cannot handle me at my worst, then you do not deserve me at my best.'

As I place the used teabag back on the side plate, he turns his head gazing enquiringly at me, with the look of hunger and thriving lust. 'This is my favorite tea; how did you know I loved this so?' My voice is quiet, wheezy. I simply cannot believe I am sitting opposite RICHARD C. MAST - in a coffee shop in NY. He frowns, some not too much you- it shows on his face the lines, he knows I am hiding something, and that is what I am falling for him.

I pop the teabag into the teapot and proximately fish it out again with my teaspoon.

'I like my tea black, and weak,' I mutter some- to him running my fingers through his her like we were longtime lovers, then he said- 'I see, she's your little girlfriend then, that you in-love with -Now and forever?' I said- 'You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because the reality is in conclusion better than your dreams.'

She is a really- good friend of mine, that is all, and we have shared a lot. Why did you think he was my girlfriend? Now and forever.' 'She's more like family,' I whisper, holding his body tightly with mine. A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you- love them if you want to? Right... it is just showing caring...?

Then the nods from him are slightly neat looking, all him, satisfied with my response, and glances down at his blueberry muffin. His long fingers deftly peel back the paper- and I watch, fascinated, looking at his dick. As he is me... all over the eye are going. Spellbound, 'The way you smiled at him, is wonderful my girlfriend Jan said... looking into it, with her nose up my butt looking into the walls- TVs, and him at you.'

His gray gaze holds mine. I want to look away, but I am caught- him doing things I like with his butt, he is so alarming, yet everything I need. I frown and stare down at my hands again, laying on the bed, recessing thought to go through my head. I told you yesterday that I wanted you on this site how do you feel about that?

Oh, this is getting silly, she loves you all the way, why me too. 'Why do you ask?' I want to know- 'why'- 'for I can...' he said. 'You seem nervous around other girls, yet not her or me- that works.' 'Do you want some? Of this all the time?' sure- they say yes to me- he asks, and that amused, secret smile is back, of I have a blond and a dark-haired girl all at the same time... Yet would he be happy with just two? I ponder the thoughts even if he could hear them...

RICHARD C. MAST- He just grinds. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. Holy crap, that is personal, I thought- to I met yesterday and the right for me. she is not her girlfriend?' Yah well see- when I do them both at the same time. I love this game...

(Thoughts she could not hear-)

Katie- 'I find you intimidating.' 'There's nothing mysterious about me.' I flush scarcely think about all I could have had him just sick it in me- I mean all the riches in the world, but mentally pat myself on the back for my candor, and gaze at my hands again. I hear his sharp intake of breath.

'It gives me some sort of inkling of what you might be thinking,' he breathes.' You are a secret, 'You should find me intimidating,' he nods as I do you. 'You are very honest, and blunt- about what he wants and how he wants it.

'Please don't look down, at me and to that to me- it hurts,' I said to him, 'why?'

'Why- I do not think you should- Why- it is for my taking; he said... and you cannot stop it... what are you going to do about it I run you- and thought you... I glance at him, and he gives me an encouraging but wry smile.'

Unsure- feeling yet contented... in his arms.

19

I get up in the morning barking orders to my Echo Dot, and she is more than happy to do them all for me, like play music, and get the thing going for me when I do not want to be going.

I like to see your face.' I am just nervous around you, she said right? Nope- you are not unlike any others I had... you are not the youngest either.

Oh... Me? Mysterious?

‘I think you’re very self-contained,’ he murmurs.

Crap is what I said! ‘Me, I had not realized I was so self-contained? ‘Except when I was blushing, of course, which is often with someone like him. Have I offended you?’ He sounds surprised. Not at all... I just wish I knew what you were blushing about.

He said you can feel safe with me.’ ‘Do you always make such personal annotations?’ ‘No,’ I answer truthfully, to why yet I did not want to say it was all in my mind anyway. ‘He is so-o good.’ I thought...

He pops a small piece of blueberry muffin into my mouth and starts and I start to chew it slowly, and he goes for a kiss, odd yet sweet, not taking his eyes off me, as he pulled back for the kisses, and as if on the indication of the fact I was all his, and I blushed.

‘I’m used to getting my way, Merry,’ he murmurs.’

In- all things.’ This is not going the way I thought it was going to go. I cannot believe I am feeling so antagonistic towards him. It is like he is trying to warn me off. ‘But you’re very high-handed,’ I retaliate quietly. Why, haven’t you asked me to call you by your first name?’

I am surprised by my audacity. He raises his eyebrows at me and, if I am not mistaken by this or how I feel, he flushes slightly too, at the sight of me and what I was about to do to him- in fiery passion.

‘I do not doubt it, was the fact that he was thinking about her, or thinking that it was wrong. Why, why has this conversation become so serious, in his mind about her? Has he fallen in love with just her... or is this his mind overthinking things?’

The next day- I am with Merry- ‘Are you into having a child?’

He asks, sure, why do you want to do that now with me, I said back, it may be a plan if you want to do this. Is that I am for your breeder...?

He walked out of the room all PISSY! Whoa... he keeps- changing my course of life. Yet, I am not going to say not- I am- young, I do not know, um-a I what, or what I want to do. ‘Tell me about your parents, they're not much to say other than my mom has done it all.’ Why does he want to know this? Is it so dull, like a boy or a girl? The girl said.

Me- I thought that she is beautiful, my subconscious reminds me. I do not like the idea of me and Katie doing this, yet I do- I cannot help myself, I take a sip of my tea, and - eats another small piece of his muffin.

‘My mom lives in Georgia with her new husband Bob. My stepdad lives in Montesano.’

‘Your father?’ ‘Yes, what about him- he not in my life now or ever- and I want to say that way.’ ‘My father dropped me when I was a baby.’ ‘I’m remorseful for

bringing that up to you,' he mumbles, and a fleeting bothered look a-crossed his face.

'I do not 'member him at all.' 'And your mother remarried?'

I snuffle, one time holding back the tears, of feeling lost out on. He frowns at me. 'You could say that, but maybe it was for the best.' So... I said to him looking down.

'Neither are you.' About having a dad- 'yah...' 'You're not giving much away, are you?' ...As if in deep thought, he says, 'that in a wryly, was rubbing his chin. Holy shit, 'you've interviewed me once already, why do you ask that... it's okay for you to have your nose up my ass hole, and I can recollect some quite probing questions then, why do I.' He smirks at me, saying I would do that next time then.

That is when I said that- 'My mom is wonderful, yet I must be a grown-up at some point. She is an irredeemable romantic and has lost boyfriend's that like to skip out on her... she is currently on her fourth man this week.' I like mom there are only 7 in a week. You are more skank and Katie. 'You said that to your mom?'

'Yep!' He raises his eyebrows in surprise. I continue to say how- 'I miss her, she has them now, and like always someone is more than I.

Those lips.

Those hips.

Those...

Ah!

‘Do you have a good relationship with all of them then?’ I do not bother too. She sees her own thing. ‘Of course, I thought- I just hope he can keep an eye on her and pick up the pieces when her harebrained schemes don’t go as planned.’

I grew up with all of them getting the best of her. I smile fondly at her- like was not important. I have not seen my mom for so long. RICHARD C. MAST is watching me intently, taking infrequent sips of his coffee, with more cream than dark roast. I really should not look at his mouth, long for a kiss, yet- I feel I need loving feelings. It is unsettling to think about my past that was just the night before or so it seems to me.

20

My life story, you know already by looking into my mind and using your brain- and this technology, you can see it all like a slide show just click to preview in a menu? ‘And what is he like, not bother by any of it not even the sick frapping in the night, scaring out Katie’s name?’ I have bested sometimes 63 times in one day, I was masturbating to try to put off doing laundry. I ended up masturbating for 7 hours. I was incredibly raw and sore after, but- I guess I was 10 or so, yet I deserved it. ‘That’s it?’ - Asks, surprised, you do not think that is wrong for a girl of that age to do that- he shrugged.

What does this man expect, her for you not too? I refrain from rolling my eyes at him, yet I could not help but squeeze him tighter, harder, and longer to understand all that is me. ‘Why didn’t you want to live with your mom...?’ He asks...

and before came out of my mouth, he saw it play out in his awareness of thoughts. I cannot help but blush, this is none of his business, yet he is making it be, so he knows everything about me and so it is safe... it is like mind- rapping.

‘Siblings...?’ ‘Yes, all girls 3.’

He could see them all-the youngest no 10 or so... I do not keep up with them. There all own their own too. Yet it is the norm these days... and my little sister is in Paris, French dick suck of a boy that wants to use her up and dump her, yet that is what she wanted.’ His eyes go cloud with irritation, on my mother’s part- I said to him she fails, no? He does not want to talk about his family or himself, it all about me... yet I feel that it all the same.

‘I hear Paris is lovely for young lovers why not let her- my mom said,’ I murmur the quotes run past my mind too fast to not stop them. Why doesn’t he want to talk about my family...?

‘It is beautiful... that you have turned up as good as you did-he said. Have you been ‘good’ I can tell?’ he asks, his exasperation with what he is digging for to be forgotten. It is not nice to ask about a girl past these days... I thought not even lovers... ‘Paris?’ I squeak never been- there.

‘You well...’ ‘Of course,’ I concede, saying let us do it now-yet is that too much to ask? He looks at me with eyes glittering in the low light of the moon full shining in the windows. ‘But it’s England that I’d like to visit.’ ‘Because, I was feeling gloomy, thinking about all that just sucks...’ He tilts his head to one side, running his

index finger across his lower lip... saying sure. I blinked, and then I blinked, then I blinked ounces more hastily, so I blinked, like 3 times wildly in a chain-like of events.

I was snooping through your things in your mind. I see that you have written such a wonderful book that you do not think is good- yet I do.' All this talk of literary greats reminds me that I should be studying for him to make him bigger than he is. I glance at my watch... saying commands for it does, in timely fashions. 'I had better go... now- and get back- (I was at his home; it is huge and has 16 bedrooms or more and 4 baths.) I must study, I said, thank you for saying, that but you must not mean that. I love that, you love me like this.' 'For your exams?' 'Yes...' 'Okay, then you may go.' He said... - My mind is reeling with desire. The next day- the first question. 'Do you always wear dresses?' He asks unexpected Mostly,' I spoke... in his ear softly. He nods, shaking his head up and down. The look he gives me and the warm fuzzy feeling going in and through me- I am completely blown away by it, I know- it is LOVE.

If you were unnoticed the sensation, you would never- ever know what might have taken place, and in many ways that were worse than finding out in the first place. Because if you were off the beam, you could go onward in your lifespan without ever- ever be holding back over your shoulder and conjecturing what might have been- in the questions of what- if. And I am aware that our time together is limited, even if where 'are always together, 'Do you have girlfriends other than her?' he blurts out.

Holy crap, why must he ask this- 'I don't.' - I just said that aloud also. I do not have the time for other girls only her... his lips quirk up in a semi-smile, showing, and he looks down at me with envy. Oh... what does that mean? He blocked me from reading his mind... to toy with me. I must try to reassemble my thoughts, yet this is his game. I must get away from him, for I do something to lose him...I walk forward, and I trip, stumbling headlong into the shitter- flush.

'Shit, Merry!' - He cries. 'Yes, yes it was a mouth full of it.'

21

Kiss me damn it! I inhale deeply, that is the feeling of love... you know. I implore him, but I cannot move. 'Are you okay?' He whispers.

When she moves upwards when I insert into her. Feeling ever hitting thrust she moves with me. I am in your arms. Kiss me, please. He gazes at my hood, like the movies it about, I am paralyzed with a strange feeling of fast hart breathing that just takes over me, unfamiliar need to understand I let myself rush free, as he does with me, completely captivated by him, I feel it okay to spray him down.

He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, and gives me a small shake of his head as if in answer to my silent question, that was running in his mind- and that was do you love me? YES! _ YES! _ FREAKING! _ YES! He is staring into my eyes when he opens his eyes again, it is with some new purpose, He tugs the hand that he is holding so hard that, I fall back against him, it all happens so-o fast, yet over and over

- one minute I am falling, of the bed the next I bouncing, on my head, up-down and skidways' too, the next I am in his arms, and he is holding me tightly against his chest.

I am staring at RICHARD C. MAST'S exquisitely sculptured mouth, mesmerized, and he is looking down at me, his eyes darkening. He is breathing harder than usual, and I have stopped breathing altogether. His thumb and I feel it in me, as he brushes my lower lip, and I hear his breath a glitch.

I inhale his dipping love, vital scent taking, like the slut he wants me to be- yet I am happy to be just that. He smells of- freshly laundered sheets and some luxurious body-wash, come over me I did not even see that he has carried me into his shower room, I may have blacked out- from all hardcore love.

I want to be kissed, right here I said- and he did. (I pointed you know where,) my kindness is drawn to his beautiful body- looking over the entirety. He has one arm around me, clasping me tight to him, while the fingers of his other hand softly trace my face, and around the place that every young girl was to have touched by a man like him, gently probing exploratory me. I hold his- nervous, burning gaze for a moment or it is persistently... but eventually, and for the first time in twenty-one years, I want to feel his mouth on me. I am not the man for you he said to Katie in his mind who was see it all,' he whispers.

What- is she doing looking in on us like this? Where is this coming from, you wanted me the other night? She said... in a fast way to him, Surely, I should be

the judge of that, she thought, I frown think why I cannot have my moment with him, and my head swims with rejection- and that was felt all around- with us all.

I have 'royally screwed' I see him say to her... about all this... He has his hands on my shoulders, holding me at arm's length, watching my responses sensibly. And the only thing I can think of is that I wanted to be kissed, made it damned obvious, and he did not do it. He does not want me. He does not want me.

I am going to stand you up and let you go; we were my butt cheeks pressed against the glass window was doing like bunnies, as all the people looking in at us, in a hugging freaking stance,' he says quietly letting me down and off him, and he gently pushes me away, as it like he is slapping the shit out of himself.

(My mom thought it was something about a broken typewriter that was his grandpa's.) Yah- no! My soul screams as he pulls away, leaving me grieving, for him to feel me up to feel the hole. It like he spiked through my body, as I stand there, feeling him coming out of me.

I said to her- her being Katie... you make me feel safe.

'I've got this,' I breathed, looking at my voice. 'Thank you for killing it for us through- why,'

I mutter awash with humiliation, as the kids outside the glass point at me and uncover my body- yet that's how things are these days. How could I have misread the situation between us so utterly? I need to get away from her. I am glad to hear you

say just that, he whispered. He frowns at me in an anomalous way. He has not taken his hands off me, or his eyes.

‘For keeping me,’ I whisper- thank you- your everything I needed.

He does not want me- though Katie- why?

Then a million-thought rushed through my mind as to why not... I bet you could find them all no- can you?

22

‘Thanks for doing the photoshoot and giving me all these nude photos of you to keep- I love them- you could justify it in a magazine with these, I will see that you do.

I shudder to think, my puss hole is going to be wide open on the cover, what could have happened to me, if daddy would see that- or mom. I am standing in front of him feeling like a fool. Um- wow- it just looks like a black hole yet boys love to look up it- (ah girl thoughts.) Yet for the money and him what?

Do you want to come and sit down in the room for a moment and see me edit these to enhances what you have going for you, looking them all over to pick with one well go on the cover- of a ‘Girlfriend Monthly’ - he bought them out back in 2019.’

He releases me, his hands, off my boobs, and the playing and they go down to his sides, his hand was on me pulling shoulder strap down, and well I shake know

what comes next- it is more sex, you got it, I clear my mind some. All my vague, unarticulated hopes have been dashed, looking at myself this way- yet for him anything. Outside the room, I turn briefly to face him, but cannot look him in the eye. With all the kids looking at me see me as the girl on the cover... it was that, fast there, I am on the big screens in the NY all nudes. Being naked this day is something we feel fee for doing... with cameras everywhere why not show it all-and we do not care- if a 5-year-old sees it- they will understand soon enough...

What was I thinking too much? I admonish myself. My subconscious mocks me, I look around to see all of me- all over the place- I am the IT girl of the day. I never wanted that... I wrap my arms around myself- for Katie was happy for me and want to show love, and turn to face the road... to move on with my day, I quickly make my way across, conscious that - is behind me, I murmur, it is only for a month... I was inquiry my dumb thoughts.

She stops, and the anguish in his voice demands my attention, as she is running to me, with open arm, she there my true love has found me... she is always there for me even if I want to die a slow and painful death, overall, this shit, so I peer unwillingly up at me- and she said I love it- it- is, so you- she said. Her gray eyes are bleak, fast like only she can make them do- as she runs his hand through his hair.

Huh? Therefore, he looks so desolate; this is what he gets out of you? One girl said to me, at school the next day- holding up a hard copy of me- to all to see, yet I

know they all have; I did not even blink- at her- as I was chowing on my pin- like a girl in 5th grade.

Once underneath the dark, cold concrete of the room with its bleak fluorescent light humming, I lean against the wall, before class and put my head in my hands, as I have now sat down for the teachings.

This is the big send-off, of the bell ringing out. Just to wish me luck on more tests, that have nothing to do with what I want to do in life.

-And-

Their Brad jerking off under the desk to my photo! Do not giggle, it is true! It seems like, um- that is okay for a-boys, yet not a girl these days... also, the girl next to me just got in trouble for it- yet boys can do anything for they' are known for it.

'Thanks: said the man teaching the class for the embraceable photography of a classmate- there Dee.' 'Um- well thank- thank you.' she said. I cannot disguise the sarcasm in my voice. Saying: 'She is a good kid stop it!'

He meant it!

23

Unforbidden and annoying tears pool in my eyes. Thinking of all that has happened these past days, what has not- and what going to... What was not I thinking about it all?

I turned on my heel, on the left foot, for I was nervous, vaguely amazed, that I did not trip- I have a habit of falling on my face, yet that is just me.

I see him in my mind, without giving him a second glance, I disappear down the hall toward the bathroom, run yet I cannot get away when he is in my head always. Why am I crying over this?

Drawing up my knees I see in a stall, I fold in on myself.

Grief is something that never was something I could take, like with my dashed hopes, dreams, and soured outlooks. Placing my head on my knees, I let the irrational tears fall unrestrained. How ridiculous am I for doing such? I sink to the side of the shitter and meltdown, angry at myself for this senseless feedback- of feeling all types of love.

This ridiculous pain will be smaller the smaller I am if I do this... I have never been on the receiving end of rejection for my own doing, I want this- yet I do not- I do not know what I want- really- I do not. I want to make myself as small as possible. To just fade away from life. I am crying over the loss of something I never had, and that is my pride.

Okay... so I was always one of the last to be picked for basketball or volleyball - but I understood that - running and doing something else at the same time as bouncing or throwing a ball is not my thing. I am a solemn liability in any sporting field.

I am too pale, feeling and showing, like- passionately thinking in thoughts, though, I have never put myself out there, ever.

Her welcoming smile fades when she sees me. Analytically, I thought to stop! As he said to stop me with crossness in the voice of thought. I am sure neither of them has been found sobbing alone in dark places. I see Katie standing there to hold me. She drags me home with her arm around her one shoulder. I just need a good cry. A lifetime of insecurity I have had and, too skinny, too shabby, clumsy, my extensive list of faults goes on.

My subliminal is emblematically screaming at me, arms folded, leaning on one leg, then pitter-pattering her foot in frustration-

(Five hours have passed...)

Katie is sitting at the dining table on her laptop when I arrive.

She asked: 'Marry what's wrong?'

'You've been crying,' she has an excellent gift for me being there all the time like she is now, just stating there. 'What did that bastard do to you?' She howls, and her face, jeez, she is scary.

That is the problem, I should just be happy, and I am not sure if I know how to do that... why can't I?

'Nothing Katie is wrong with me other than what is wrong with me.' The thought brings an ironic smile to my face. 'Then I ask- why have you been crying?

‘Like- You never cry,’ she says, her voice relaxing some as she continued taking. She puts her arms around me and hugs me for a side.

I have to say something; just to get her to back chest. She stands, her gray eyes brimming with concern, yet she feels that way about me all the time. ‘Nope, RICHARD C. MAST saved me,’ I whisper for being just like all of them that do not care. ‘Nonetheless, I was quite shaken by it, anyway.’ It was fine, nothing to worry about really.

‘Okay, he has more money than you, but then he has more money than most people in America! And you are not happy with that? He has everything-’ ‘What do you mean...? What are you trying to say?’ ‘Oh Katie, it’s obvious isn’t.’ I whirled around, to face her as she stood in the kitchen doorway, looking at me that way. ‘Merry! For heaven’s sake, how many times must I tell you? You are a total baby,’ she intersects me as I blabber. He likes you more than me... ‘oh don’t be silly.’

That is what this is all about.

‘Katie she just shrugs.

I need to study.’ I cut her short. She frowns and says that she cannot wait. And she is holding me in her arms like a lover.

‘Katie, please, do not get mad at me for this- ‘Never.’

Interval: 4 If Only in My Dreams

(Remembering back too... Earth before the end.)

This is what he meant, for me to do with my life be his... anytime he wants it-girl and nothing more and nothing less, and it makes his rejection easier to accept. Yet, the money is why, like- I am here- and the love too... yah that... I have been working on my studies more than them being with him or her... I would say it was to clear my head. I was looking over the paper that was said I wrote, I pretend to read the article, that Katie made for me. Beyond its suddenly, blindingly obvious. He is too gloriously good-looking, not to think about a non-stop. I know he loves me, yet he has a hard way of really showing just that.

I, understand, yet not so- her words make more sense than mine- I questioned this... He is not the man for me. I can live with this.

It is only when I am in bed, that I try to sleep, that I allow my thoughts to drift off some- yet all the voices run through me- never hushing up. Never slowing- never stopping, for me to have a moment- in time to think alone.

'Katie, she is particularly good,' 'I am going to study, is what I said to her... just wanted to get away from her mouth.' I am not going to think about him again, for now, I vow to myself, and opening my revision notes, I start to read. Thus far, his face keeps looking it to mine, and I see him looking back in the glass.

I put my pen down, which makes all the font that I write out and comforts it into text in word. I am finished, with my re-write of her draft. My final exam is over, I said- this will do simply fine the grin spread over my face can be helped. It is the first

time all week that I have smiled over something other than him. It is Friday, and we shall be celebrating tonight, really celebrating.

Paris- with Katie not him, I need this- the city the lights the sound- of something other than me inquiry all that is me - and him. She slanted her head and smiled at her companion, with grace seated her at the best table in the restaurant; her smile, at least, was honest, though almost nothing else about her was. The pale gray of her eyes was warmed to by sweet colored contact lenses; her blond hair had been darkened by the low light of the tower in the background, then subtly streaked with lighter shadows. in her arms mentally begging her with every fiber of my being to kiss me, is what I needed, just her true love for me - not asking... never demanding.

He did not want me as a girlfriend, this week he was off doing what he does. I turn on to my side, now at the hotel, with her in the single bed, Frivolously, I wonder if he is with a new younger girl?

Think back of: 'Ah!' settled in his chair with a contented sigh, returning her smile. she is so beautiful woman in her teen years; she looks like the US, with glossy dark hair and liquid gray eyes, and a luxurious mouth.

(Bed)

I close my eyes and begin to drift, and she nudges me, groggy as I- she had gambled that he would not have his people dig any deeper than that, that he would run out of the patience required to wait for the answers before, she made a move on me.

Her manufactured background was only a few layers deep; I knew she and I wanted too so why not; she had not had time to prepare more. He is saving himself. Well not for you, my sleepy subconscious has a final swipe at me before unleashing itself on my dreams.

I might even get drunk! I said- we can hear it is not agents the law here, I have never been drunk before, I know that the trill was wearing off, I glance across the sports hall at Katie, and she is still scribbling furiously, five minutes to the end of foolish. This is it, the end of my academic career if he tunes in...

She had done the best she could in the time she had, she knew that she would have to be off doing her study's even on this run over the sea that takes less than a day now.

He made a point of keeping himself in shape, and his hair had not yet started to gray-either that or he was as skilled as she at touch-ups. 'You look especially lovely tonight; have I told you that yet?' I shall never have to sit in rows of anxious, isolated students again. Inside I am doing graceful cartwheels around my head, knowing full well that is the only place I can do graceful cartwheels.

...And that night, I dream of her and I live long ever after, and I am running through dark places with eerie strip lighting doing things we should not, and I do not know if I am running toward something, that I should want or not- the dream, leads me with choices, it is just not clear.

Katie stops writing and puts her pen down. She glances across at me, and I catch her Cheshire cat smile too. We head back to our apartment together in her Mercedes, refusing to discuss our final paper. Katie is more concerned about what she is going to wear to the bar this evening. I am busily fishing around in my purse for my keys.

‘Merry, there’s a package for you, their flowers from him...’ she said.

Odd, I have not ordered anything from Amazon recently.

Katie is standing on the steps up to the front door holding them.

‘No.’ Katie’s eyes are wide with disbelief.’ I nod as I did before.

‘You have, she said, he loved you more than anything, I starting to believe it.’ But then her gaze was warm, wet whit tears for she was in love with me more than him at that moment. I knew... she had trained long and hard to acquire it, I knew she was the one that would always care about me. ‘Thank you again... I said to him in a mind message.’ I recognize the quote was something slandered, where was the love in it?

I have not let myself dwell on RICHARD C. MAST - for the past week. Okay... so his blue eyes are still haunting my dreams, as she plays with me in them too, and I know it will take an eternity to expunge the feel of his arms around me and his wonderful perfume from my brain. Why has he sent me this?

‘Can’t think of anyone else, that would do this for me, like him though.’

‘What does this card mean...?’ ‘I have no inkling; it is a warning - scrupulously he keeps threatening me off, with gifts. I have no idea why- he thinks I will keep coming back- just for the coming.

-And-

It is not like I am beating his door down- and the wood hard- with only him.’ I frown some... ‘I know you do not want to talk about him, Merry, but he is seriously into you. Warnings or no.’ ‘I do not know, and I do not care. I cannot accept these from him, yet not feeling as I did in the past some of the caring went away.

This is what he meant, for me to do with my life be his... anytime he wants it-girl and nothing more and nothing less, and it makes his rejection easier to accept.... Yet, the money is why, like- I am here- and the love too... yah that... I have been working on my studies more than them being with him or her... I would say it was to clear my head. I was looking over the paper that was said I wrote, I pretend to read the article, that Katie made for me. Beyond its suddenly, blindingly obvious. He is too gloriously good-looking, not to think about non-stop. I know he loves me, yet he has a hard way of really showing just that.

I, understand, yet not so- her words make more sense than mine- I questioned this... He is not the man for me. I can live with this.

It is only when I am in bed, that I try to sleep, that I allow my thoughts to drift off some- yet all the voices run through me- never hushing up. Never slowing- never stopping, for me to have a moment- in time to think alone.

‘Katie, she is particularly good,’ ‘I am going to study, is what I said to her... just wanted to get away from her mouth.’ I am not going to think about him again, for now, I vow to myself, and opening my revision notes, I start to read. Thus far, his face keeps looking it to mine, and I see him looking back in the glass.

I put my pen down, which makes all the font that I write out and comforts it into text in word. I am finished, with my re-write of her draft. My final exam is over, I said- this will do simply fine the grin spread over my face can be helped. It is the first time all week that I have smiled over something other than him. It is Friday, and we shall be celebrating tonight, really celebrating.

Paris- with Katie not him, I need this- the city the lights the sound- of something other than me inquiry all that is me - and him. She slanted her head and smiled at her companion, with grace seated her at the best table in the restaurant; her smile, at least, was honest, though almost nothing else about her was. The pale gray of her eyes was warmed to by sweet colored contact lenses; her blond hair had been darkened by the low light of the tower in the background, then subtly streaked with lighter shadows. in her arms mentally begging her with every fiber of my being to kiss me, is what I needed, just her true love for me - not asking... never demanding.

He did not want me as a girlfriend, this week he was off doing what he does. I turn on to my side, now at the hotel, with her in the single bed, Frivolously, I wonder if he is with a new younger girl?

Think back of: 'Ah!' settled in his chair with a contented sigh, returning her smile. she is so beautiful woman in her teen years; she looks like the US, with glossy dark hair and liquid gray eyes, and a luxurious mouth.

(Bed)

I close my eyes and begin to drift, and she nudges me, groggy as I- she had gambled that he would not have his people dig any deeper than that, that he would run out of the patience required to wait for the answers before, she made a move on me. Her manufactured background was only a few layers deep; I knew she and I wanted too so why not; she had not had time to prepare more. He is saving himself. Well not for you, my sleepy subconscious has a final swipe at me before unleashing itself on my dreams.

I might even get drunk! I said- we can hear it is not agents the law here, I have never been drunk before, I know that the trill was wearing off, I glance across the sports hall at Katie, and she is still scribbling furiously, five minutes to the end of foolish. This is it, the end of my academic career if he tunes in...

She had done the best she could in the time she had, she knew that she would have to be off doing her study's even on this run over the sea that takes less than a day now.

He made a point of keeping himself in shape, and his hair had not yet started to gray-either that or he was as skilled as she at touch-ups. ‘You look especially lovely tonight; have I told you that yet?’ I shall never have to sit in rows of anxious, isolated students again. Inside I am doing graceful cartwheels around my head, knowing full well that is the only place I can do graceful cartwheels.

...And that night, I dream of her and I live long ever after, and I am running through dark places with eerie strip lighting doing things we should not, and I do not know if I am running toward something, that I should want or not- the dream, leads me with choices, it is just not clear.

Katie stops writing and puts her pen down. She glances across at me, and I catch her Cheshire cat smile too. We head back to our apartment together in her Mercedes, refusing to discuss our final paper. Katie is more concerned about what she is going to wear to the bar this evening. I am busily fishing around in my purse for my keys.

‘Merry, there’s a package for you, their flowers from him...’ she said.

Odd, I have not ordered anything from Amazon recently.

Katie is standing on the steps up to the front door holding them.

‘No.’ Katie’s eyes are wide with disbelief.’ I nod as I did the last two times-as if everything is getting rapacious, and lost in remembrance of the times before.

‘You have, she said, he loved you more than anything, I starting to believe it.’ But then her gaze was warm, wet whit tears for she was in love with me more than him at that moment. I knew... she had trained long and hard to acquire it, I knew she was the one that would always care about me. ‘Thank you again... I said to him in a mind message.’ I recognize the quote was something slandered, where was the love in it?

I have not let myself dwell on RICHARD C. MAST - for the past week. Okay... so his blue eyes are still haunting my dreams, as she plays with me in them too, and I know it will take an eternity to expunge the feel of his arms around me and his wonderful perfume from my brain. Why has he sent me this?

‘Can’t think of anyone else, that would do this for me, like him though.’ ‘What does this card mean...?’ ‘I have no inkling; it is a warning - scrupulously he keeps threatening me off, with gifts. I have no idea why- he thinks I will keep coming back- just for the coming.

It is not like I am beating his door down- and the wood hard- with only him.’ I frown some... ‘I know you do not want to talk about him, Merry, but he is seriously into you. Warnings or no.’ ‘I do not know, and I do not care. I cannot accept these from him, yet not feeling as I did in the past some of the caring went away.

2

I love Katie, she is so loyal and supportive. I repack the books and leave them on the dining table. Katie hands me a glass of champagne.

‘To the end of exams and our new life in Seattle,’ she grins.

‘To the end of exams, our new life in Seattle, and excellent results.’ We clink glasses and drink.

The bar is loud and hectic, full of soon to be graduates out to get trashed. José joins us. He will not graduate for another year, but he is in the mood to party and gets us into the spirit of our newfound freedom by buying a pitcher of margaritas for us all. As I down my fifth, I know this is not a clever idea on top of the champagne.

‘So, what now Merry?’ She shouts at me over the noise, Katie has the constitution of a she-ass. ‘That is doubtful,’ she calmly replied. ‘I have never liked any wine.’ She had made that plain from the start, who disliked the taste of wine, I thought sitting over here looking at her thinking that. Her taste buds were deplorably working-class. She enjoyed a glass of wine, (I thought) now she is drinking only coffee or bottled water; order coffee for her, of that... I giggle.

‘I think I’d better have a beer.’

‘I’ll get us a pitcher.’

‘More drink, Merry!’

Katie bellows...

‘Classy- in France?’

Sue!

Her eyes for Katie, are glittery and wet for her. I move out of her way to hold and get up from our table. She is taking photos, yes, of her in her tight jeans, her usual stunning self, and high heels, hair piled high with tendrils hanging down softly around her face. I giggled over it like I have no idea what the time is, I will wake with her over to the tower and well go up and kiss at the top. Good thinking, Merry. I stagger off through the crowd, she yells for me, and I whisper in her mind that I am over here. Of course, there is a line, but at least it is moving fast to the top. I am suppressing a drunken smile, hit me like an involuntary, looking out over with her in my arms and the kiss.

Back at the hotel my head, ponding so-o... I go for swims uncomfortably, with all the others, a lot of kids but even so it was nice, Well, the object of the exercise was to get drunk, on it is the other way 'round. I have succeeded, in working it off. I stare blankly over and over in a fast way- at the poster on the back of the toilet door that extols the virtues of safe sex. Yah- NO! like that is going to happen.

Holy mother of moo- moo, did I just call RICHARD C. MAST in my mind again? Shit. My phone rings for him it is all in my mind though, and it makes me jump when he says 'what do you want.' I squeak in surprise; by how the man he is being to me for what see to be noted on my own doing.

This is what it is like - not an experience to be repeated. The line has moved, and it is now my turn.

'Howdy,' I bleat timidly into the handset. I had not calculated on this.

‘I’m coming to get you,’ he says and hangs up... before I said I did want him too. The only RICHARD C. MAST - could sound so calm and so threatening at the same time. I pull my jeans up after the poster said not to do what I just did. My heart is thumping. Coming to get me? Well, I am coming to get her- ha. Hang on, I am fine. Oh no. I am going to be sick... no... He is just messing with my head.



I said- ‘Holy freaking crap.’



He cannot find me here, I would say so with GPS within my body as we all have now, Besides, it will take him 4 hours to get here from NY, and we will be long gone by then. I wash my hands and check my face in the mirror.

I love Katie, she is so loyal and supportive. I repack the books and leave them on the dining table. Katie hands me a glass of champagne.

‘To the end of exams and our new life in NY,’ she grins.

‘To the end of exams, our new life in NY, and excellent results.’ We clink glasses and drink.

The bar is loud and hectic, full of soon to be graduates out to get trashed. José joins us. He will not graduate for another year, but he is in the mood to party and gets us into the spirit of our newfound freedom by buying a pitcher of margaritas for us all. As I down my fifth, I know this is not a clever idea on top of the champagne.

‘So, what now Merry?’ She shouts at me over the noise, Katie has the constitution of a she-ass. ‘That is doubtful,’ she calmly replied. ‘I have never liked any wine.’ She had made that plain from the start, who disliked the taste of wine, I thought sitting over here looking at her thinking that. Her taste buds were deplorably working-class. She enjoyed a glass of wine, (I thought) now she is drinking only coffee or bottled water; order coffee for her, of that... I giggle.

‘I think I’d better have a beer maybe 5.’

‘I’ll get us a pitcher.’

‘More drink, Merry!’

Katie bellows...

‘Classy- in France?’

Sue!

Her eyes for Katie, are glittery and wet for her. I move out of her way to hold and get up from our table. She is taking photos, yes, of her in her tight jeans, her usual stunning self, and high heels, hair piled high with tendrils hanging down softly around her face. I giggled over it like I have no idea what the time is, I will wake with her over to the tower and well go up and kiss at the top. Good thinking, Merry. I stagger off through the crowd, she yells for me, and I whisper in her mind that I am over here. Of course, there is a line, but at least it is moving fast to the top. I am

suppressing a drunken smile, hit me like an involuntary, looking out over with her in my arms and the kiss.

Back at the hotel my head, ponding so-o... I go for swims uncomfortably, with all the others, a lot of kids but even so it was nice, Well, the object of the exercise was to get drunk, on it is the other way 'round. I have succeeded, in working it off. I stare blankly over and over in a fast way- at the poster on the back of the toilet door that extols the virtues of safe sex. Yah- NO! like that is going to happen.

Holy shit, did I just call RICHARD C. MAST in my mind? Shit. My phone rings for him it is all in my mind though, and it makes me jump when he says 'what do you want.' I squeak in surprise; by how the man he is being to me for what see to be noted on my own doing.

This is what it is like - not an experience to be repeated. The line has moved, and it is now my turn.

'Howdy,' I bleat timidly into the handset. I had not calculated on this.

'I'm coming to get you,' he says and hangs up... before I said I did want him too. The only RICHARD C. MAST - could sound so calm and so threatening at the same time. I pull my jeans up after the poster said not to do what I just did. My heart is thumping. Coming to get me? Well, I am coming to get her- ha. Hang on, I am fine. Oh no. I am going to be sick... no... He is just messing with my head.

I said- 'Holy freaking crap.'

I for one looked flushed and slightly unfocused. He cannot find me here, I would say so with GPS within my body as we all have now, 'You've been gone so long.' Katie reprimands me. Besides, it will take him 4 hours to get here from NY, and we will be long gone by then. I wash my hands and check my face in the mirror. 'Where were you?' I wait at the bar for what feels like an eternity for the pitcher of beer and eventually return to the table. 'The girl's room on a call, that I shouldn't have made.' Mind dealing- I said... 'ah-Huh-ha-a' were sitting out said at a bar café. 'All-out-in the - fresh air- and yes.' 'Katie, I think I had better think that you and I have a thing...' 'Merry, you are such a softie with him- grow some lady nuts and say- freak you.'

'I'll be five minutes...'

'...Going to MASTURBATE-?'

'Yep!'

Pulling off my panties, I reach between my legs and pulls on the white string, and gently takes my tampon out of me, and tosses it into the nearby toilet. As the inside of me felt as if it was unfolding free. Holy cow... just to the thoughts of his erection springs free. The muscles inside the deepest, darkest part of me clench in the most flavorsome fashion. I am going to fuck myself now hard, she murmurs as she

positions the head of the wiggling pulsating dildo at the entrance of her self-sex. I hear the slosh- of me- and then it of the rushing out of the deepest clenching of what happened pulled out and its soft swirl at the tip of my nose.

5

I make my way through the crowd another time, thinking of how I was going to get off like three more times, in 15. I am beginning to feel nauseous, my head is spinning uncomfortably, see in the little girl in the open stall next to me get there faster than I! and she is like freaking 10! and I am a little unsteady with my frapping 3 figuring or have girl gotten even more slutty.

More unsteady than usual, she got it down. God, I turn on- you? No- nope ...?... did not think so prev. 'I think I've just had a bit too much to drink, I feel like more pee than that is coming out of me.' I smile weakly at her and say- GOD FOR YOU HUNNY- good for you. 'And you too,' she murmurs, and her dark eyes are watching me intently, saying why you doing this on your own at your age... is a young girl thing to do.

'Do you need a hand?' she asks and steps closer undies at her feet, putting her arm around me some. I have this.' I try and push her away weakly, of age, yet there nothing wrong with it. 'Merry, please,' she whispers, It Kate in my head saying do not do it, yet the young child is holding me in her arms, pulling me close, like a lover. These days' free love is love! No matter the age...

6

‘You know I like you, Merry, please.’ He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head. Holy freak... he is going to kiss me. Her hand has slipped into my hair, and she is holding me.

She whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet - of candy and Kool-Aid. She gently kisses me along my jaw, and lips and moves up to the side of my mouth and then right on my parted lips. I feel frightened, drunk, and out of control, yet I love having fee love like this- it like I was her age all over. The feeling is sickly sweet.

You are my friend, no and for life, I said to her, and I think, I am going to throw up, so you should runoff. A voice in the dark says quietly. Holy shit! In my mind- RICHARD C. MAST - he is now, see what I have done.

I glance anxiously up at RICHARD C. MAST. He is glowering at Katie, and he is furious, like me for doing a young one as he said. Crap, and fly trap-My stomach hauls, and I double over, worse than when blood is shooting out of my hole, I will hold you.’

She grabs my hair and pulls it out of the firing line- my body no longer able to accept the alcohol, and I vomit outstandingly on to the ground at me and the little French girls’ feet her name was- Willow.

She has her arms around my middle body - holding my hair in a makeshift ponytail down my back so it is off my face, her hands the other is I try awkwardly to

push her hair out of the way, but I vomit again... and again, even on to her half nude body.

Even when my stomach's empty, and nothing is coming up, oh shit... 'If you are going to throw up again, I note, with deep thankfulness, that it is in relative darkness. I vow silently that I will never drink again, yet that like say I cannot have a day without sex. It is going down in me at some point.

My hands are resting on the block wall... How long is this going to last? I questioned... she takes her T stands, and I wipe my mouth, on she said she did not care... love at first sight... I questioned it. This is just too appalling for words, Katie said... I must go out now. So-o horrifying gasping heaves of wackiness- my body feels. Then it concludes... Katie is still hovering by the entrance to the girl's room watching us.

Her (the young girl's) hand is barely holding me up - vomiting profusely is exhausting. takes his hands off I say to him- I am hectic with embarrassment, repulsed with myself. When I come around. My hands in on my head I groan, as I place them there. Like that was the solitary worst moment of my lifespan. Twins taking a crap is what I think of at this moment- why I do not know. Oh- yeah- I do- there they are both doing just that- like- looking in at me over in there apparent 5,00 feet up or so all glass too. What should I say to him, for him to forgive this?

RICHARD C. MAST's rejection will not be something good. I try to remember a worse one, that I have done, and I cannot. I glare at him, in my mind. For

he is acting like my dad, not my lover. Oh, the humiliation... my mother was far worse. Marry who are you kidding, he is just seen you hurl all over the ground- nothing more said- Katie, she feels that what I did was nothing. Yet I still look shamefaced to myself, and him- or so I think.

‘You know I like you, Merry, please.’ He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head. Holy freak... he is going to kiss me. Her hand has slipped into my hair, and she is holding me.

She whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet - of candy and Kool-Aid. She gently kisses me along my jaw, and lips and movies up to the side of my mouth and then right on my parted lips. I feel frightened, drunk, and out of control, yet I love having fee love like this- it like I was her age all over. The feeling is sickly sweet.

You are my friend, no and for life, I said to her, and I think, I am going to throw up, so you should runoff. A voice in the dark says quietly. Holy shit! In my mind- RICHARD C. MAST - he is now, see what I have done.

I glance anxiously up at RICHARD C. MAST. He is glowering at Katie, and he is furious, like me for doing a young one as he said. Crap, fly trap-My stomach hauls, and I double over, worse than when blood is shooting out of my hole, I will hold you.’

She grabs my hair and pulls it out of the firing line- my body no longer able to accept the alcohol, and I vomit outstandingly on to the ground at my feet, and the little French girls' feet also, her name was- Willow.

She has her arms around my middle body - holding my hair in a makeshift ponytail down my back so it is off my face, her hands the other is I try awkwardly to push her hair out of the way, but I vomit again... and again, even on to her half nude body.

Even when my stomach's empty, and nothing is coming up, oh shit... 'If you are going to throw up again, I note, with deep thankfulness, that it is in relative darkness. I vow silently that I will never drink again, yet that like say I cannot have a day without sex. It is going down in me at some point.

My hands are resting on the block wall... How long is this going to last? I questioned... she takes her T stands, and I wipe my mouth, on she said she did not care... love at first sight... I questioned it. This is just too appalling for words, Katie said... I must go out now. So-o horrifying gasping heaves of wackiness- my body feels. Then it concludes... Katie is still hovering by the entrance to the girl's room watching us.

Her (the young girl's) hand is barely holding me up - vomiting profusely is exhausting. takes his hands off I say to him- I am hectic with embarrassment, repulsed with myself. When I come around. My hands in on my head I groan, as I place them there. Like that was the solitary worst moment of my lifespan. Twins taking a crap is

what I think of at this moment- why I do not know. Oh- yeah- I do- there they are both doing just that- like- looking in at me over in there apparent 5,00 feet up or so all glass too. What should I say to him, for him to forgive this?

RICHARD C. MAST's rejection will not be something good. I try to remember a worse one, that I have done, and I cannot. I glare at him, in my mind. For he is acting like my dad, not my lover. Oh, the humiliation... my mother was far worse. Marry who are you kidding, he is just seen you hurl all over the ground- nothing more said- Katie, she feels that what I did was nothing. Yet I still look shamefaced to myself, and him- or so I think.

7

I have a few choice words for my so-called friend, none of which I can repeat in front of RICHARD C. MAST - There is no disguising your lack of ladylike behavior, and I can only produce- and this is so, so many shadows darker in terms of, I risk a glance at him, I see hem looking back at me mirrored back in my stare.

He is staring down at me, his face composed, yet he can help but fall for me fast, giving nothing away about how he was feeling about what I did we fall. Turning, I glance at Katie whom and, like me, is scared by the true filling that he heads to me from that day. I mutter, staring at the handkerchief which I am furiously worrying with my fingers. It is so soft, and worm, as slid his fingers in her, he would expect her to share his bed tonight, but he was destined to be disappointed once again, in her saying: I do not feel the need after, soloing- so many times today. Her hatred was so strong

she had barely been able to force herself to let him kiss her and accept his touch with some temperateness.

There was no way in hell like she had let him do more than that to her tonight- for the movies running in her had of him acting like an ass and or like her dad. 'I am sorry, he said for what I have done to you. Just in my thoughts of...' Apologize... and say back off. Katie mutters, derogatory but we both ignore that, and he slinks off back into the of my mind for rest and sleep. I am on my own with doing me- and just Kate.

'We've all been here, perchance not quite as dramatically as you,' he says dryly. 'It is about knowing your limits, Merry. I mean, I am all for pushing limits, but this is beyond the pale. My head rings with excess alcohol and frustration. Do you make a habit of this kind of behavior?'

He was scolding me like an errant child, something you would never do to me I said to Kate that had me held by the butt, arching my back as she is holding me in her arms, for passion and cute kissing- then 69, her butt in my face, I move her lips around using sucking at mouth and teeth and tongue.

Katie- Put her legs over your shoulders and grab onto her waist or open her vagina. (The last one feels better) or have her butt hole in your well- nose. Do not fart!

And at first kiss outside her vagina and then slowly lick her inside and just pretend she is the most beautiful thing you have ever tasted and if she wants to talk dirty to her but talks to her about that beforehand so she will not be offended.

Hope this helps.

I love it. It is such a turn on.

1) You want to kiss/nibble on her neck first. It is an effective way to start turning her on.

2) Suck on her nipples and play with them with your tongue. This too is another great turn on.

3) While you are doing these, massage her PUSS-PUSS over her pants just to get her ready for it.

4) Work your way down, slowly, and sexually.

5) Open up her PUS*Y and go straight to the Cl*t.

6) Smack the PUS*Y with your tongue fast, and suck and tug on it (not too hard though.)

7) As you are sucking her PUS*Y, slide your fingers in and out of her vagina opening.

8) Once you have 2 fingers in there, and they are facing up, curve them like a hook, and without going in and out, stroke her G-spot.

If this is your first time, beware of the smell and taste, as it makes most guys gag at first.

Part of me wants to say, if I want to get drunk every night like this, then it is my decision and nothing to do with him - but I am not brave enough. Not now that I have thrown up in front of him. Why is he still standing there?

‘No,’ I said contritely. ‘I have never been drunk before and right now I have no desire to ever be again.’ Yet, I know that is a lie...

‘Come on, I’ll take you home,’ she murmurs- do this to me.

I just do not understand why he is here. I begin to feel faint. She notices my dizziness and grabs me before I fall and hoists me into his arms, holding me close to her chest like a child. For sucking and seizing on her nipples. ‘I need you, Katie.’ Holy Moses, I say at C-*-M! I am in her arms again. Where I do the same to her butt in the air, I go for it for like a half-hour.

8

‘Dancing,’ with Katie in the club she shouts, and I can tell he is mad at me for acting slutty. He is eyeing me- him the RICHARD C. MAST suspiciously.

I struggle with my black jacket and place my small shoulder bag over my head, so it sits at my hip. I am ready to go, once I have seen Katie; to party my ass off... yet he is saying NO... No in my mind. And I just having fun. It is earsplitting, packed, and the music is underway, thus there is a huge mass on the dance floor. she sets me down, and, taking my hand, leads me back into the bar.

She knew that I went out for some air- of him... embarrassed weak I feel dumb, and still drunk, exhausted, ashamed, and on some strange equal unquestionably off the scale electrified, by the cocktail of things I took down.

He is clutching my hand I see them all wavy to my sight. Looking at them all swirly. - such a confusing array of emotions, play tricks in my mind like haunted school girl ghosts. I will need at least a week to process them all, I knew even in this state of mind of senseless.

Katie is not at our table, and Katie has disappeared. Levi looks lost and forlorn on his own. 'Where's Katie? She was off with some young girl doing what I did the night before.' I see that she had to feel as I did... she was always like that with me... we must be the same in all-or not...! 'My head is beginning to pound in time to the thumping bass line of the music.'

'Dancing,' with Katie in the club she shouts, and I can tell he is mad at me acting slutty. He is eyeing me- him the RICHARD C. MAST suspiciously.

I struggle with my black jacket and place my small shoulder bag over my head, so it sits at my hip. I am ready to go, once I have seen Katie; to party my ass off... yet he is saying NO... No in my mind. And I just having fun. It is earsplitting, packed, and the music is underway, thus there is a huge mass on the dance floor. she sets me down, and, taking my hand, leads me back into the bar.

She knew that I went out for some air- of him... embarrassed weak I feel dumb, and still drunk, exhausted, ashamed, and on some strange equal unquestionably off the scale electrified, by the cocktail of things I took down.

He is clutching my hand I see them all wavy to my sight. Looking at them all swirly. - such a confusing array of emotions, play tricks in my mind like haunted school girl ghosts. I will need at least a week to process them all, I knew even in this state of mind of senseless.

Katie is not at our table, and Katie has disappeared. She looks lost and forlorn on her own. 'Where's Katie? She was off with some young girl doing what I did the night before.' I see that she had to feel as I did... she was always like that with me... we must be the same in all-or not...! 'My head is beginning to pound in time to the thumping bass line of the music.'

He rolls his eyes at me and takes my hand again and leads me to the bar. He is served immediately.

'She's on the dance floor,' I touch RICHARD C. MAST's arm and lean up and shout in his ear, brushing his hair with my nose, smelling his clean, fresh smell. All those forbidden, unfamiliar feelings that I have tried to deny surface and run amok through my drained body. I flush, and somewhere deep, deep down my muscles clench deliciously. He is such a - Control-Freak - I said to her- saying: your just having fun. He is watching me intently, mirrored in my- lost young girl like the look of my eyes.

‘Drink- Drink- drink’ I heard her say, to this young girl in the bar and she was about 14,’ he shouts his order at me. He looks irritated and livid, with me like I am his sex- Dollie, and nothing more...He is so overbearing, I thought. Give me love- I thought- or is sex now just the love? What is his delinquent? The moving lights are meandering and turning in time to the music casting strange colored light and obscurities all over the bar and the business. He is alternately white, green, blue, and bloodshot red.

There a dead girl in an ash box sitting on the ground, on the walkway to my home, she was just burnt a day go, and dumped, here, and this is where she is resting- no one cares about her like death and dumping ash that nothing- or that she was only 5 years of age...I take a hesitant swallow; I think about the life she never had- on like all the others thoughts going through my mind I care.

‘All of it,’ he shouts.

I sway slightly, and he puts his hand on my shoulder to steady me. Um- Merry... are you ever going to live this down, and say she slipped away? She was my sister girl- and mom and they just dump her off... to be kicked by passing feet- yah but that is what they do these days- girl.

Cemeteries are wasted spaces of land, why do that when you need to construct things in that space. There is nothing left to remember her by- nothing by the memories in my mind of whom she was.

It makes me feel queasy, as I look in the box 3 x 6-inch books and see nothing but blackened asks... blowing some in the wand of the high walkways... in the glowing tingling light of the smoggy covered skyline. I notice this thought of what she was wearing the last time that I saw her, a blur though- wearing; a loose white linen shirt, snug jeans, playing in the park on the roof of the high-rise, pink converse sneakers, and a pink and white jacket, I would know I see a flick in some of the ash hitting my face as dust in the wind.

He rolls his eyes at me and takes my hand again and leads me to the bar. He is served immediately.

'She's on the dance floor,' I touch RICHARD C. MAST's arm and lean up and shout in his ear, brushing his hair with my nose, smelling his clean, fresh smell. All those forbidden, unfamiliar feelings that I have tried to deny surface and run amok through my drained body. I flush, and somewhere deep, deep down my muscles clench deliciously. He is such a - Control-Freak - I said to her- saying: your just having fun. He is watching me intently, mirrored in my- lost young girl like the look of my eyes.

'Drink- Drink- drink' I heard her say, to this young girl in the bar and she was about 14,' he shouts his order at me. He looks irritated and livid, with me like I am his sex- dolly, and nothing more...He is so overbearing, I thought. Give me love- I thought- or is sex now just the love? What is his delinquent? The moving lights are meandering and turning in time to the music casting strange colored light and

obscurities all over the bar and the business. He is alternately white, green, blue, and bloodshot red.

There a dead girl in an ash box sitting on the ground, on the walkway to my home, she was just burnt a day go, and dumped, here, and this is where she is resting- no one cares about her like death and dumping ash that nothing- or that she was only 5 years of age...I take a hesitant swallow; I think about the life she never had- on like all the others thoughts going through my mind I care.

‘All of it,’ shouts in my head- like the way she passed- by some killing her for the dollar in her underwire where she keeps and for the young rape.

I sway slightly, and he puts his hand on my shoulder to steady me. Um- Merry... are you ever going to live this down, and say she slipped away? She was my sister girl- and mom and they just dump her off... to be kicked by passing feet- yah but that is what they do these days- girl.

Cemeteries are wasted spaces of land, why do that when you need to construct things in that space. There is nothing left to remember her by- nothing by the memories in my mind of whom she was.

It makes me feel queasy, as I look in the box 3 x 6-inch books and see nothing but blackened asks... blowing some in the wand of the high walkways... in the glowing tingling light of the smoggy covered skyline. I notice this thought of what she was wearing the last time that I saw her, a blur though- wearing; a loose white linen shirt, snug jeans, playing in the park on the roof of the high-rise, pink converse

sneakers, and a pink and white jacket, I would know I see a flick in some of the ash hitting my face as dust in the wind.

Now in bed sleeping pills at my side, taking the glass from me, she places them for me- so sweet. Her shirt is unbuttoned at the top, and I see a sprinkling skin coming at me- and I out... then just to see her ass in my face... when I come to it, in my groggy frame of mind, she looks delicious.

9

He takes my hand once more. Holy cow - he is leading me onto the dance floor. Shit. I do not dance. He can sense my reluctance, and under the colored lights, I can see his amused, slightly sardonic smile. He gives my hand a sharp tug, and I am in his arms again, and he starts to move, taking me with him. Boy, he can dance, and I cannot believe that I am following him step for step. It is because I am drunk that I can keep up. He is holding me tight against him, his body against mine... if he were not clutching me so tightly, I am Sue I would swoon at his feet. In the back of my mind, my mother's often-recited warning comes to me: Never trust a man who can dance.

I investigated him/ his daily thoughts and what he did, just to see that he was with a 15-year-old- not me- saying- 'Such a tight pussy- so tight and young-and small and the sucking oh so tight it is letting are out the sides. - he said as I see that he was with a new girl named- Nataliee.

I just was modified...Really likes she likes someone, I gasp. Katie is making her moves go in her mind for me of her hook up, she had with her new friend.

She is dancing her ass off, and she only ever does that if she likes someone. It means there will be three of us for breakfast tomorrow morning. Katie! Outside and inside my head pounding away, loud. I cannot hear what he says, I tuned it out... it was my wishes. I cannot tell the color under the pulsating to all the heat of the flashing lights going off, is the day starting a new.

I Katie- curly blonde hair, and light, wickedly gleaming eyes.

Me- She pulls me into her arms, where she is more than happy to be...

Katie!

But I never got to talk to her, the girl she had last night- I had to meet her. A new day is all the same- until the night-RICHARD C. MAST propels us off the dance floor in double-quick time. Is she okay? She said- she is not you- though. I need to do the safe sex lecture, for the school, the teacher I know is a lezbo, but yes... she loves me.

I can see where things are heading for her and him, In the back of my mind, I hope she reads one of the posters on the back of the toilet doors. My thoughts crash through my brain, fighting the drunk, fuzzy feeling. It is so warm in here, so loud, so colorful - too bright. My head begins to swim with so many thoughts of him and her, and her and then him- and what she did- he did- and what I did with all, oh no... The last thing I hear beforehand, I pass out in RICHARD C. MAST's arms is his harsh description. It is incredibly quiet, I am comfortable and warm, the light is muted, in this bed. 'Freak!' I open my eyes, Hmm... I am tranquil for a moment.

‘This looks bigger than I remember,’ I said to him- by this time I have a lust for him so- that I need him- oh so much. Oh so...! It is oddly familiar to me yet all-new the love only he can give- odd like only she can too as a girl- and he a boy. I have no idea where I am, halfway in the night- I come to it and see I am in his bed nude, and he going down on me, lovingly hard! I am enjoying the strange unfamiliar surroundings, of him just work- work- working it! Where? ...? ... Where am I? My confused brain struggles over its recent painterly memories.

Holy crap- I said- like that is carp the is holy- said Katie in my mind... ha funny. I am the hotel he owns in Atlantic City. ... in a suite- I see him coming to me, ready for loving making, As I did the last time, we were together, he loves it when I spray all over his face, as he loves doing to me as well! I have stood in a room like this with Katie. Oh shit. I am in RICHARD C. MAST’s suite. This room is worth more than the-White House- and some of those places that why do not care about- How did I get here?

I questioned... memories of the previous night come slowly back to haunt me, like my sister young life coming to end fast over someone, that did not love her just for hot young sex. She never had a boy toy. Nothing dead at 5! Holy shit. No socks...No jeans... I see this photo of her playing- where she was just being a kid-I see the first time she cum-med, on her little bed, it was the same night- she found out she was going to have to not see me any longer- so Katie showed her to be happy- I glance at the bedside night table- and see her face on the screen that movies the photos. I do not remember coming here. I am wearing my t-shirt, bra, and panties. I FEEL

Broken- The drinking, oh no the drinking, the handset call, oh no the phone call, the vomiting, oh no the vomiting. Katie and then RICHARD C. MAST. Oh no. I cringe inwardly.

The orange juice tastes heavenly, it is I sit up and take the tablets. On it is a glass of orange juice and two tablets. Advil. He is such a Control freak that he is, he thinks of the whole thing. I do not feel that bad, much healthier than I merit too. Dehydration quenching and invigorating. Nothing beats freshly squeezed orange juice for refreshing a parched mouth.

How are you feeling?’ ‘Improved better than I earned,’ I gabble.

‘How did I get here?’ My voice is small, contrite.

Do not worry about it he said- fast.

Followed by: ‘Good morning Merry. I peek up at him, I for one, like- feel like a two-year-old, if I close my eyes when I am not here. There is a knock on the door, for it to open. RICHARD C. MAST's sweat; the notion does odd things to me. My heart leaps into my mouth, and I cannot seem to find my voice, to say come in. He opens the door anyway and strolls in, being all sweet. Holy hell, he has been working out, in tight shorts that show off his backside.

He comes and sits down on the edge of the bed, way, off, like his hair, blowing in the wind as the doors were open to the cityscape. Sweat, hard I take a deep breath and close my eyes, I cannot bear to look at the cheat any longer. He is staring at

me, blue bright eyes, and as usual, I have no idea what he is thinking, even if it is run hard in my mind of all the facts. He closes enough for me to touch, for me to smell, of him to be overpowering- and I want him- oh no- YES, do I want him!

The towel, his hand was thrown on the bed at my feet. He hides his thoughts and feelings so well. Grasps is let out of me for he has me around his neck, going in for it. Like his sex toy that is a rag doll, I wriggle hard. He even takes me from behind over the chair without me giving the okay- I was all his! And I look down and see that I am shaved! Oh my... 'Did you put me to bed?' Did you get me this night's top?

His face is blank.

'Yes!'

Um- it was an intoxicating cocktail- 'After you passed out, that he gave me last night my little girl down under is still red- and I can walk- so much better than a margarita, I was out in the la-la- land- and I do remember the hardcore FREAKING! and now I can speak from experience, this man goes in hard and deep.

'Did I throw up again?' My voice is quieter. Do not worry about getting pregnant I have taken care of that too... with this. An implant was placed by a doter last night when you were passed out- do not thank me!

Do not say anything- do not even think about it- it for your good.

Um- is all I got out before his index finger hashed me- up to my lips.

'Did you undress me?' I whispered...

‘Funny you cute- that’s the least of your worries!’ He spoke.

Um...?

I thought...! I think too much...? He is right...? Or is this wrong...?

The RICHARD C. MAST

Preface:

Days moments like this only happen in my wildest dreams when I was a young girl warm in pink sheets in my school age-girl tween bed, or so I thought- now I am not dreaming. I was wearing tight blue short shorts with no underwear and a sports blue and white tank top with no bra. His breathing is an array, matching mine. Pulling off his gray briefs, his erection springs free. Turning to face him, pushing the foreskin back gently- to look like any man should or would- I am shocked to find has his erection firmly in my grasp and tight and hard and exposed to my kisses.

My mouth drops open for my flavored Popsicle of oh-da-hot-sexy-man- and sexy tattoos covering his arms. “I’m going to fuck you now,” he whispers as he positions the head of his erection at the entrance of me, his he pulls me up to his standing body and I am off my feet... Holy cow...!

I am only 100 lbs. and a sweet little slut calling him by his title for him, and he loves it and he can pick me up and hold me upside down hair down to his feet he is full on to my clitoris for his 69 sex- both as deep and bobbing as we can go, both in

the heat of passion at the same time. How cow- I am upside down, yet I love the way he can passionate me around for our sex, it is so hot!

Then whipped right side up still being held like a small child in his big manly arms- my arms holding on for dear life around his neck as I for the first time fell ever-so-small- to him- yet ever-so tall being now so far of the ground; for more of his sex hardcore penis pounding sliding up and down on his belly like a young little teen slut that- I am for only him- like the wet gushing orgasms run now down his body.

Holy cow, it is so-o big! As my young tight hole is now open like my and showing blackness that is my vagina parted- looking like my pocketbook when unclasped, for as he no slips out and back in hard as I am now thrown on my backside- legs sprawled. just moments after I had fully let go, he had my butt to my chin as he made his clam pile driver himself into China in me, I am all his! The cream is now further down my body, into my pubic hair, I hear the slosh's and then with tight pushing outs of me- of thick white cream-pies 3 times in 10 minutes, I gasp as all- and everything- like him run a lather all over my pubic bone.

It is warm. The gentleness at that moment surprises me. That was not the end for this strong man that needs the grunting out, I kneel at his front as he is jerking his long hard Vancouver pink head thumping cock at my hanging out as my hands are behind my backside, my mouth eagerly awaiting tongue panting, as rubbed out love for me at that moment stream, surge, flows swiftly in, flopping all of it around my teeth, not letting any go to waste, I show him I love it all, I swallow hard and then

show that it's all gone like a good little girl- that I am for him- and that- I don't mind my face covered- 'daddy's cummies!'

Then I was on top for all of 2 more minutes. My little nipples hard like the clit now out of its hardcover as I give him my sex, raw, and longing, only moments have passed and its time yet again and we are at the climax of running out. I also love looking up at him with big feminine eyes most of the time- in my lip and one hand grasping knowing- that I have done an excellent job having all of him jammed as hard and far down my throat as possible now gasping.

(Back in time)

'No... not really...' I whisper.

'It's more the idea of it?' he prompts.

'I suppose. Feeling pleasure... when one is not supposed to.'

'I remember feeling the same. Takes a while to get your head around it.'

Holy hell. This was when he was a kid.

'You can always safe... word... Merry. Do not forget that. And... if you follow the rules... which fulfill a deep need in me for control and to keep you safe... then perhaps we can find a way forward.'

'Why do you need to control me?'

'Because it satisfies a need in me that wasn't met in my formative years.'

‘So, it’s a form of therapy?’

‘I have not thought of it like that... but yes... I suppose it is.’ I can understand. This will help.

‘But... here is the thing... one moment you say do not defy me... the next you say you like to be challenged. That is an exceptionally fine line to tread successfully.’ He gazes at me for a moment... then frowns.

‘I can see that. But you are doing fine so far.’

‘But at what personal cost? I am tied up in knots here.’ ‘I like you tied up in knots...’ he smirks.

‘That’s not what I meant!’ I splash him in exasperation.

He gazes down at me... arching an eyebrow.

‘Did you just splash me?’ ‘Yes.’ Holy shit... that look.

‘Oh... Miss Merry.’ He grabs me and pulls me onto his lap... sloshing water all over the floor.’ I think we have done enough talking for now.’

He clasps his hands on either side of my head and kisses me. Deeply. Possessing my mouth. Angling my head... controlling me. I moan against his lips. This is what he likes. This is what he is so good at. Everything ignites inside me and my fingers are in his hair... holding him to me... and I am kissing him back and saying I want you to the only way I know. He groans... shifting me so I am astride him...

kneeling over him... his erection beneath me. He pulls back and looks at me... his eyes hooded... glowing and lustful. I drop my hands to grab onto the edge of the bath, but he grips both my wrists and pulls my hands behind my back... holding them together in one hand.

‘I’m going to have you now...’ he whispers and lifts me so that I am hovering over him.

‘Ready?’ He breathes.

‘Yes...’ I whisper... and he eases me onto him... slowly... exquisitely slowly... filling me... watching me as he takes me.

I groan... closing my eyes... and I revel in the sensation... the stretching fullness. He flexes his hips... and I gasp... leaning forward... resting my forehead against his.

‘Please let my hands go...’ I whisper.

‘Don’t touch me...’ he pleads... and releasing my wrists... he grabs my hips.

Clasping the bath ledge... I move up and then down slowly... opening my eyes to gaze at him. He is watching me. His mouth opens slightly... his breathing halted... stilted... his tongue between his teeth. He looks so... hot. We are wet and slippery and moving against each other. I lean down and kiss him.

He closes his eyes. Tentatively... I bring my hands up to his head and run my fingers through his hair... not taking my lips from his mouth. This is allowed. He

likes this. I like this. And we move together. I tug his hair... tipping his head back and deepen the kiss... riding him... faster... picking up the rhythm. I moan against his mouth. He starts to lift me faster... faster... holding my hips. Kissing me back.

We are wet mouths and tongues... tangled hair... and moving hips. All sensation... all-consuming again. I am close... I am starting to recognize this delicious tightening... quickening. And the water... it is swirling around us... our whirlpool... a stirring vortex as our movements become more frantic... sloshing everywhere... mirroring what is happening inside me... and I just do not care.

I love this man. I love his passion... the effect I have on him. I love that he is flown so far to see me. I love that he cares about me... he cares. It is so unexpected... so fulfilling. He is mine... and I am his.

‘That’s right... baby...’ he breathes.

-And-

I come... my orgasm ripping through me... a turbulent... passionate... apogee that devours me whole. And suddenly RICHARD C. MAST crushes me to him... his arms wrapped around my back as he finds his release.

‘Merry... baby!’ He cries... and it is a wild invocation... stirring and touching the depths of my soul.

We lie staring at each other... gray eyes into blue... face to face... in the super king bed... both hugging our pillows on our fronts. Naked. Not touching.

Just looking and admiring... covered by the sheet.

‘Do you want to sleep?’ RICHARD C. MAST asks... his voice soft. He is beautiful; the mix of colors in his hair vivid against the white Egyptian cotton pillowcase... gray eyes... smoldering... expressive. He looks concerned.

No. I am not tired.’ I feel strangely energized. It has been so good to talk... I do not want to stop.

‘What do you want to do?’ he asks.

‘Talk.’ He smiles.

‘About what?’

‘Stuff.’

‘What stuff?’

‘You.’

‘What about me?’

‘What’s your favorite film?’ He grins.

‘Today... it is ‘The Piano’.’ His grin is infectious.

‘Of course. Silly me. Such a sad... exciting score... which no doubt you can play? So many accomplishments... Mr...’

‘And the greatest one is you... Miss Merry.’

‘So, I am number seventeen.’

He frowns at me not comprehending.

‘Seventeen?’

Several women you’ve um... had sex with.’

His lips quirk up... his eyes shining with incredulity.

‘Not exactly.’

‘You said fifteen...’ My confusion is obvious.

‘I was referring to the number of women in my playroom. I thought that is what you meant. You did not ask me how many women I had had sex with.’

‘Oh.’ Holy shit... there is more... How? I gape at him. ‘Vanilla?’

‘No. You are my one vanilla conquest...’ he shakes his head... still grinning at me.

Why does he find this funny? And why am I grinning back at him like an idiot?

‘I cannot give you a number. I did not put notches in the bedpost or anything.’

‘What are we talking... tens... hundreds... thousands?’ My eyes grow wilder as the numbers get larger.

‘Tens. We are in the tens... for pity’s sake.’

‘All submissive?’

‘Yes.’

Stop grinning at me...’ I scold him mildly... trying and failing to keep a straight face.

‘I cannot. You are funny.’

‘Funny peculiar or funny ha-ha?’

‘A bit of both I think.’ His words mirror mine.

‘That’s a damned cheek... coming from you.’ He leans across and kisses the tip of my nose.

‘This will shock you... Merry. Ready?’

I nod... wide... eyed... still with the stupid grin on my face.

‘All submissive in training... when I was training. There are places in and around NY that one can go to and practice. Learn to do what I do...’ he says.

What?

‘Oh.’ I blink at him.

‘Yep... I have paid for sex... Merry.’

‘That’s nothing to be proud of...’ I mutter haughtily. ‘And you are right... I am deeply shocked. And cross that I cannot shock you.’

‘You wore my underwear.’

‘Did that shock you?’

‘Yes.’ My inner goddess pole... vaults over the fifteen... foot bar.

‘You didn’t wear your panties to meet my parents.’

‘Did that shock you?’

‘Yes.’

Jeez... the bar’s moved to sixteen feet.

‘I can only shock you in the underwear holdings.’

‘You told me you were a virgin. That is the biggest shock I have ever had.’

‘Yes... your face was a picture... a Kodak moment.’ I giggle.

‘You let me work you over with a riding crop.’

‘Did that shock you?’

‘Yep.’

I grin.

‘Well... I may let you do it again.’

‘Oh... I do hope so-o... Miss Merry. This weekend?’ ‘Okay...’ I agree...
shyly.

‘Okay?’

Yes- I will go to the Red Room of Pain again.’

‘You say my name.’

‘That shocks you?’

‘The fact that I like it shocks me.’ ‘RICHARD C. MAST.’ He grins.

‘I want to do something tomorrow.’ His eyes glow with excitement.

‘What?’

‘A surprise. For you.’ His voice is low and soft.

I raise an eyebrow and stifle a yawn at the same time.

‘Am I boring to you... Miss Merry?’ His tone is sardonic.

‘Never.’

He leans across and kisses me gently on my lips.

‘Sleep...’ he commands... then switches off the light.

And in this quiet moment... as I close my eyes... spent and sated... I am in the eye of the storm. And despite all, he had said... and what he has not said... do not think I have ever been so happy.

RICHARD C. MAST stands in a steel... barred cage. Wearing his soft... ripped jeans... his chest and feet are mouthwateringly naked... and he is staring at me. His private... joke smile etched on his beautiful face and his eyes a molten gray. In his hands, he holds a bowl of strawberries. He ambles with athletic grace to the front of the cage... gazing intently at me. Holding up a plump ripe strawberry... he extends his hand through the bars.

‘Eat...’ he says... his tongue caressing the front of his palate as he enunciates the ‘t.’

I try and move toward him... but I am tethered... held back by some unseen force around my wrist... holding me. Let me go.

‘Come... eat...’ he says... smiling his delicious crooked smile.

I pull and pull... let me go! I want to scream and shout... but no sound emerges. I am mute. He stretches a little further... and the strawberry is at my lips.

‘Eat... Merry.’ His mouth forms my name... lingering sensually on each syllable.

I open my mouth and bite... the cage disappears... and my hands are free. I reach up to touch him... graze my fingers through his chest hair.

‘Merry.’ No. I moan.

‘Come on... baby.’

No. I want to touch you.

‘Wake up.’

NO- please, my eyes flicker unwillingly open for a split second. I am in bed and someone is nuzzling my ear.

‘Wake up... baby...’ he whispers... and the effect of his sweet voice spreads like warm melted caramel through my veins.

It is RICHARD C. MAST. Jeez... it is still dark... and the images of him from my dream persists... disconcerting and tantalizing in my head.

‘Oh... no...’ I groan. I want back at his chest... back to my dream.

Why is he waking me?

It is the middle of the night... or so it feels. Holy shit. Does he want sex... now?

‘Time to get up... baby. I am going to switch on the sidelight.’ His voice is quiet.

‘No...’ I groan.

'I want to chase the dawn with you...' he says... kissing my face... my eyelids... the tip of my nose... my mouth... and I open my eyes. The sidelight is on. 'Good morning... beautiful...' he murmurs.

I groan... and he smiles.

'You are not a morning person...' he murmurs.

Through the haze of light... I squint and see RICHARD C. MAST leaning over me... smiling. Amused.

Amused at me. Dressed! In black.

'I thought you wanted sex...' I grumble.

'Merry... I always want sex with you. It is heartwarming to know that you feel the same...' he says dryly.

I gaze at him as my eyes adjust to the light... but he still looks amused... thank heavens.

'Of course, I do... just not when it's so late.'

'It is not late... it is early. Come on... up you go. We are going out. I will take a rain check on the sex.'

'I was having such a nice dream...' I whine.

'Dream about what?' he asks patiently.

‘You.’ I blush.

‘What was I doing this time?’

‘Trying to feed me strawberries.’

His lips twitch with a trace of a smile.

Dr. Flynn could have a field day with that. Up... get dressed. Do not bother to shower... we can do that later.’ We! I sit up... and the sheet pools at my waist... revealing my body. He stands to give me a room... his eyes dark.

‘What time is it?’

‘5:30 in the morning.’

‘Feels like 3:00 a. m.’

‘We do not have much time. I let you sleep if possible.

Come.’ ‘Can’t I have a shower?’ He sighs.

‘If you have a shower... I will want one with you... and you and I know what will happen then... the day will just go. Come.’

He is excited. As a small boy... he is iridescent with anticipation and excitement. It makes me smile.

‘What are we doing?’ ‘It is a surprise. I told you.’ I cannot help but grin up at him.



‘Okay.’ I clamber off the bed and search for my clothes. Of course, they are neatly folded on the chair beside my bed. He is laid out a pair of his jersey boxer briefs too... Ralph Lauren... no less. I slip them on... and he grins at me. Hmm... another piece of RICHARD C. MAST's underwear... a trophy to add to my collection... along with the car... the BlackBerry... the Mac... his black jacket... and a set of old valuable first editions. I shake my head at his largesse... and I frown as a scene from Tess crosses my mind: the strawberry scene. It evokes my dream. To hell with Dr. Flynn... Freud would have a field day... and then he would expire trying to deal with Dark Shadows.

‘I’ll give you some room now that you’re up.’ RICHARD C. MAST exits toward the living area... and I wander into the bathroom. I have needed to attend to... and I want a quick wash. Seven minutes later... I am in the living area... scrubbed... brushed and dressed in jeans... my camisole... and RICHARD C. MAST's underwear. RICHARD C. MAST glances up from the small dining table where he is eating breakfast.

Breakfast!

Jeez... currently.

‘Eat...’ he says.

Holy Moses... my dream. I gape at him... thinking about his tongue on

his palate. Hmm... his expert tongue.

‘Merry...’ he says sternly... pulling me out of my reverie.

It is too early for me. How to handle this? ‘I will have some tea. Can I take a croissant for later?’ He eyes me suspiciously... and I smile very sweetly.

‘Don’t rain on my parade... Merry...’ he warns softly.

‘I will eat later when my stomach’s woken up. About 7:30 a. m., okay?’

‘Okay.’ He peers down at me.

Honestly. I must concentrate hard on not making a face at him.

‘I want to roll my eyes at you.’

‘By all means... do... and you will make my day...’ he says sternly.

I gaze up at the ceiling.

‘Well, a spanking would wake me up... I suppose.’ I purse my lips in quiet contemplation.

RICHARD C. MAST’s mouth drops open.

‘On the other hand, I don’t want you to be all hot and bothered... the climate here is warm enough.’ I shrug nonchalantly.

RICHARD C. MAST closes his mouth and tries extremely hard to look displeased... but fails hopelessly.

I can see the humor lurking in the back of his eyes.

‘You are... as ever... challenging... Miss Merry. Drink your tea.’

I notice the Twining’s label... and inside... my heart sings. See... he does care... my subconscious mouths at me. I sit and face him... drinking in his beauty. Will I ever get enough of this man?

As we leave the room... RICHARD C. MAST throws a sweatshirt at me.

‘You’ll need this.’ I look at him... puzzled.

‘Trust me.’ He grins... leans over and kisses me quickly on the lips... then grabs my hand and we head out.

Outside... in the relative cool of the half... the light of pre... dawn... the valet hands RICHARD C. MAST a set of keys to a flash sports car with a soft top. I raise an eyebrow at RICHARD C. MAST... who smirks back at me.

‘You know... sometimes it’s great being me...’ he says with a conspiratorial but smug grin that I simply cannot help emulating. He is so lovable when he is playful and carefree. He opens my car door with an exaggerated bow... and in I climb. He is in such a good mood.

‘Where are we going?’

‘You’ll see.’ He grins as he slips the car into drive... and we head out on Savannah Parkway. He programs the GPS and presses a switch on the steering wheel and a classical orchestral piece fills the car.

‘What’s this?’ I ask as the sweet... sweet sound of a hundred violin strings assail us. ‘It is from La Traviata. An opera by Verdi.’ Oh... my... it is lovely.

‘La Traviata? I have heard of that. I cannot think where. What does it mean?’ RICHARD C. MAST glances at me and smirks.

Well... literally... the woman led astray. It is based on Alexander Dumas’s book... *La Dame aux Camelias*.’

‘Ah. I have read it.’

‘I thought you might.’

‘The doomed courtesan.’ I squirm uncomfortably in the plush leather seat. Is he trying to tell me something? ‘Hmm... it’s a depressing story...’ I mutter.

‘Too depressing? Do you want to choose some music? This is on my iPod.’ RICHARD C. MAST has that secret smile again.

I cannot see his iPod anywhere. He taps the screen on the console between us... and behold... there is a playlist.

‘You choose.’ His lips twitch up into a smile... and I know it is a challenge.

RICHARD C. MAST's iPod... this should be interesting. I scroll through the touch screen... and find the perfect song. I press play. I would not have figured him for an Amanda fan. The club... mix... techno beat assaults us both... and RICHARD C. MAST turns the volume down. It is too early for this: Britney's at her most sultry.

'Toxic... eh?' RICHARD C. MAST grins.

'I don't know what you mean.' I feign innocence.

He turns the music down a little more... and inside I am hugging myself. My inner goddess is standing on the podium awaiting her gold medal.

He turned the music down.

Victory!

'I didn't put that song on my iPod...' he says casually... and puts his foot down so that I am thrown back into my seat as the car accelerates along the freeway.

What? He knows what he is doing... the bastard. Who did? And I must listen to Amanda going on and on. Who... who?

The song ends and the iPod shuffles to Damien Rice being mournful.

Who? Who? I stare out of the window... my stomach-churning. Who?

'It was Sarrah...' he answers my unspoken thoughts. How does he do that?

'Sarrah?'

‘An ex... who put the song on my iPod.’

Damien warbles away in the background as I sit stunned. An ex...

Ex... submissive?

An ex...

‘One of the fifteen?’ I ask.

‘Yes.’

What happened to her?’

‘We finished.’

‘Why?’

Oh jeez. It is too early for this kind of conversation. But he looks relaxed... happy even... and what is more... talkative.

‘She wanted more.’ His voice is low... introspective even... and he leaves the sentence hanging between us... ending it with that powerful little word again.

‘And you didn’t?’ I ask before I can employ my brain to mouth filter.

Shit... do I want to know?

He shakes his head.

‘I’ve never wanted more... until I met you.’

I gasp... reeling. Oh my. Isn't this what I want? He wants more. He wants it... too! My inner goddess has backflipped off the podium and is doing cartwheels around the stadium.

It is not just me.

'What happened to the other fourteen?' I ask.

Jeez, he is talking... take advantage.

'You want a list? Divorced... beheaded... died?'

You are not Bill VIII.'

'Okay. In no order... I have only had long-term relationships with four women... apart from Elly.'

'Elly?'

'Mrs. Robinson to you.' He half-smiles his secret private joke smile.

Elly! Holy Freak. The evil one has a name and it is all... foreign-sounding. A vision of a glorious... pale... skinned vamp with raven hair and ruby... red lips come to mind... and I know that she is beautiful. I must not dwell. I must not dwell.

'What happened to the four?' I ask to distract myself.

'So inquisitive... so eager for information... Miss Merry...' he scolds playfully.

‘Oh... Mr. When Is Your Period Due?’

‘Merry... a man needs to know these things.’

‘Does he?’

‘I do.’

‘Why?’

‘Because I don’t want you to get pregnant.’

‘Neither do I! Well... not for a few years yet.’

RICHARD C. MAST blinks startled... then visibly relaxes. Okay.

RICHARD C. MAST does not want children. Now or never? I am reeling from his sudden... unprecedented attack of candor. It is the early morning? Something in the modern city water?

The modern dystopian city air? What else do I want to know?

Remembrance of Things Past.

‘So, the other four... what happened?’ I ask.

‘One met someone else. The other three wanted... more. I was not in the market for more then.’

‘And the others?’ I press.

He glances at me briefly and just shakes his head.

‘Just didn’t work out.’

Whoa... a bucket... a load of information to process. I glance in the side mirror of the car... and I notice the soft swell of pink and aquamarine in the sky behind. Dawn is following us.

‘Where are we headed?’ I ask... perplexed... gazing out at the I... 95.

We are heading south... that is all I know.

‘An airfield.’

‘We’re not going back to NY, are we?’ I gasp... alarmed. I have not said goodbye to my mom. Jeez... she is expecting us for dinner.

He laughs.



‘No... Merry... we are going to indulge in my second favorite pastime.’

‘Second?’ I frown at him.

‘Yep. I told you my favorite this morning.’

I glance at his glorious profile... frowning... racking my brain.

‘Indulging in you... Miss Merry... that must be top of my list. Any way I can get you.’ Oh...

‘Well, that’s quite high up on my list of diverting... kinky priorities too.’ I mutter... blushing.

‘I’m pleased to hear it...’ he mutters dryly.

‘So... airfield?’ He grins at me.

‘Soaring.’

The term rings a vague bell. He is mentioned it before.

‘We’re going to chase the dawn... Merry.’ He turns and grins at me as the GPS urges him to turn right into what looks like an industrial complex. He pulls up outside a large white building with a sign reading Frank Lloyd Wright -Building.

Gliding! Are we going gliding?

He switches off the engine.

‘You up for this?’ He asks.

‘You’re flying?’

‘Yes.’

‘Yes... please!’ I do not hesitate. He grins and leans forward and kisses me.

‘Another first... Miss Merry...’ he says as he climbs out of the car.

First? What sort of first? First time flying a glider... shit! No... he said that he has done it before. I relax. He walks around and opens my door. The sky has turned

to a subtle opal... shimmering and glowing softly behind the sporadic childlike clouds.
Dawn is upon us.

Taking my hand... RICHARD C. MAST leads me around the building to a large stretch of tarmac where several stifling air balloons are parked. Waiting beside them is a man with a shaved head and a wild look in his eye... accompanied by Peter.

Peter! Does RICHARD C. MAST go anywhere without that man? I beam at him... and he smiles kindly back at me.

'Mr... this is your tow... pilot... Mr. Mark Benson...' says Peter. RICHARD C. MAST and Benson shake hands and strike up a conversation... which sounds very technical about wind speed... directions... and the like.

'Hello... Peter...' I murmur shyly.

'Miss Merry.' He nods a greeting at me... and I frown. 'Merry...' he corrects himself.

'He has been hell on wheels the last few days. Glad we are here...' he says conspiratorially.

Oh... this is news... Why? Surely not because of me! Revelation Thursday! Must be something in the Savannah water that makes these men loosen up a bit.

'Merry...' RICHARD C. MAST summons me.' Come.' He holds out his hand.

‘See you later.’ I smile at Peter... and giving me a quick salute... he heads back to the parking lot.

‘Mr. Benson... this is my girlfriend Marry Sue.’ ‘Pleased to meet you...’ I murmur as we shake hands.

Benson gives me a dazzling smile.

‘Likewise,’ he says... and I can tell from his accent that he’s British.

As I take RICHARD C. MAST’s hand... there is a mounting excitement in my belly. Wow... gliding! We follow Mark Benson out across the tarmac towards the runway. He and RICHARD C. MAST keep up a running conversation. I catch the gist. We will be in a Blahnik L... 23... which is better than the L... 13... although this is open to debate. Benson will be flying a Piper Pawnee. He has been flying taildraggers for about five years now. It all means nothing to me... but glancing up at RICHARD C. MAST... he is so animated... so in his element... it is a pleasure to watch him.



The stifling air balloon itself is long... sleek... and white with orange stripes. It has a small cockpit with two seats one in front of the other. It is attached by a long white cable to a small... conventional single... burner stifling air balloon. Benson opens the large... clear Perspex dome that frames the cockpit... allowing us to climb in.

‘First, we need to strap on your parachute.’ Parachute!

‘I’ll do that...’ RICHARD C. MAST interrupts him and takes the harness off Benson... who smiles amenably at him?

‘I’ll fetch some ballast...’ Benson says and heads toward the stifling air balloon.

‘You like strapping me into things.’ I observe dryly.

‘Miss Merry... you have no idea. Here... step into the straps.’

I do as I am told... placing my arm on his shoulder. RICHARD C. MAST stiffens slightly but does not move. Once my feet are in the loops... he pulls the parachute up... and I place my arms through the shoulder straps. Deftly he fastens the harness and tightens all the straps.

‘There... you’ll do...’ he says mildly... but his eyes are gleaming.’ Do you have your hair tie from yesterday?’ I nod.

‘You want me to put my hair up?’

‘Yes.’

I quickly do as I am asked.

‘If you go...’ RICHARD C. MAST commands. He is still so bossy. I go climbing into the back.

‘No... front. The pilot sits at the back.’ ‘But won’t you be able to, see?’ ‘I will see plenty.’ He grins.

I do not think I have ever seen him so happy... bossy... but happy. I clamber in... settling down into the leather seat. It is surprisingly comfortable. RICHARD C. MAST leans over... pulls the harness over my shoulders... reaches between my legs for the lower belt... and slots it into the fastener that rests against my belly.

He tightens all the restraining straps.

‘Hmm... twice in one morning... I am a lucky man...’ he whispers and kisses me quickly. ‘This will not take long... twenty... thirty minutes at most. Thermals are not great this time of the morning... but it is so breathtaking up there at this hour. I hope you are not nervous.’ ‘Excited.’ I beam.

Where did this ridiculous grin come from? Part of me is terrified. My inner goddess... she is under a blanket behind the sofa.

‘Good.’ He grins back... stroking my face... then disappears.

I hear and feel his movements as he climbs in behind me. Of course, he is strapped me in so tightly I cannot move round to see him... typical! We are exceptionally low on the ground. In front of me are a panel of dials and levers and a big stick thing. I leave well alone.

Mark Benson appears with a cheerful grin as he checks my straps and leans in and checks the cockpit floor. It is the ballast.

‘Yep... that is secure. First time?’ he asks me.

‘Yes.’

‘You’ll love it.’

‘Thanks... Mr. Benson.’

‘Call me Mark.’ He turns to RICHARD C. MAST.’ Okay?’

‘Yep. Let us go.’

I am so glad I have not eaten anything. I am beyond excited... and I do not think my stomach would be game for food... excitement... and leaving the ground. Once again... I am putting myself into this beautiful man’s skilled hands. Mark shuts the cockpit lid... strolls over to the stifling air balloon in front... and climbs in.

The hot gas burner starts... and my nervous stomach relocates itself to my throat. Jeez... I am doing this. Mark taxis slowly down the runway... and as the cable takes the strain... we suddenly jolt forward. We are off. I hear chatter over the radio set behind me. It is Mark talking to the tower... but I cannot make out what he is saying. As the Piper picks up speed... so do we. It is very bumpy... and in front of us... the single burner stifling air balloon is still on the ground. Jeez... will we ever get up? And suddenly... my stomach disappears from my throat and free... falls through my body to the ground... we are airborne.

‘Here we go... baby!’ RICHARD C. MAST shouts from behind me. And we are in our bubble... just us two. All I hear is the sound of the wind ripping past and the distant hum of stifling air balloon engine and heat.

I am gripping the edge of my seat with both hands... so tightly my knuckles are white. We head west... inland away from the rising sun... gaining height... crossing over fields, woods, homes, and me... 95. Oh my. This is amazing... above us only sky. The light is extraordinary... diffuse and warm in hue... and I remember José rambling on about 'magic hour'... a time of day that photographers adore... this is it... just after dawn... and I am in it... with RICHARD C. MAST.

Abruptly... I am reminded of José's show. Hmm. I need to tell RICHARD C. MAST. I wonder briefly how he will react. But I will not worry about that... not now... I am enjoying the ride. My ears pop as we gain height... and the ground slips further and further away. It is so peaceful. I completely get why he likes to be up here.

Away from his BlackBerry and all the pressures of his job.

The radio crackles into life... and Mark mentions 300 feet. Jeez... that sounds high... I check the ground... and I can no longer clearly distinguish anything down there.

'Release...' RICHARD C. MAST says into the radio... and suddenly the Piper disappears... and the pulling sensation provided by the small stifling air balloon ceases.

We are floating... floating over Modern city.

Holy freak... it is exciting. The stifling air balloon banks and turns as the air changes and we dip... and we spiral toward the sun- Icarus- This is it. I am flying close

to the sun... but he is with me... leading me. I gasp at the realization. We spiral and spiral and... the view in this morning light is spectacular.

‘Hold on tight!’ he shouts... and we dip again... only this time he does not stop. suddenly... I am upside down... looking at the ground through the top of the cockpit canopy.

I squeal loudly... my arms automatically lashing out... my hands splayed on the Perspex to stop me falling. I can hear him laughing. Bastard! But his joy is infectious... and I am laughing too as he writes the stifling air balloon.

‘I’m glad I didn’t have breakfast!’ I shout at him.

‘Yes... in hindsight... it’s good you didn’t... because I’m going to do that again.’

He dips the stifling air balloon once more until we are low to the ground. This time... because I am prepared... I hang on to the harness... but it makes me grin and giggle like a fool. He levels the stifling air balloon once more.

‘Beautiful... isn’t it?’ He calls.

‘Yes.’

We fly... swooping majestically through the air... listening to the wind and the silence... in the early morning light. Who could ask for more?

‘See the joy... stick in front of you?’ he shouts again.

I look at the stick that is moving slightly between my legs. Oh no... where is he going with this?

‘Grab hold.’

Oh shit. He is going to make me fly the stifling air balloon. No!

‘Go on... Merry. Grab it...’ he urges more vehemently.

Tentatively... I grasp it and feel the pitch and yaw of what I assume are rudders and paddles or whatever keep this thing in the air.

‘Hold tight... keep it steady. See the middle dial in front? Keep the needle dead center.’

My heart is in my mouth. Holy shit. I am flying a glider... I am soaring.

‘Good girl.’ RICHARD C. MAST sounds delighted.

‘I am amazed you let me take control...’ I shout.

‘You would be amazed at what I had let you do... Miss Merry. Back to me now.’

The joystick moves suddenly... and I let go as we spiral down several feet... my ears starting to pop again. The ground is getting closer... and it feels like we could be hitting it short. Jeez... that is scary.

‘BMA... this is BG N Papa 3 Alpha... entering left downwind runway seven to the grass... BMA.’ RICHARD C. MAST sounds like his usual authoritative self.

The tower squawks back at him over the radio... but I do not understand what they say. We sail around again in a wide circle... sinking slowly to the ground. I can see the airport... the landing strips... and we are flying back over me... 95.

‘Hang on... baby. This can get bumpy.’

After another circle we dip... and suddenly we are on the ground with a brief thump... racing along the grass... holy shit. My teeth chatter as we bump at an alarming speed along the ground... until we finally come to a stop. The stifling air balloon sways slightly then dip to the right. I take a deep lungful of air while RICHARD C. MAST leans over and opens the cockpit lid... clambering out and stretching.

‘How was that?’ He asks... and his eyes are a shining... dazzling silver-gray in the sun. He leans down to unbuckle me.

‘That was extraordinary. Thank you...’ I whisper.

‘Was it more?’ he asks... his voice tinged with hope.

10

‘Much more...’ I breathe... and he grins.

‘Come.’ He holds out his hand for me... and I clamber out of the cockpit.

As soon as I am out... he grabs me and holds me flush against his body. Suddenly his hand is in my hair... tugging it so my head tips back... and his other hand

travels down to the base of my spine. He kisses me... long... hard... and passionately... his tongue in my mouth. His breathing is mounting... his ardor... Holy CRAP... his erection... we are in a field. But I do not care. My hands twist in his hair... anchoring him to me. I want him... here... now... on the ground. He breaks away and gazes down at me... his eyes now dark and luminous in the early morning light... full of raw... arrogant sensuality. Wow.

He takes my breath away.

‘Breakfast...’ he whispers... making it sound deliciously erotic.

How can he make bacon and eggs sound like forbidden fruit? It is an extraordinary skill. He turns... clasping my hand... and we head back toward the car.

‘What about the glider?’

‘Someone will take care of that?’ ...He says dismissively. ‘We’ll eat now.’

His tone is unequivocal.

Food! He is talking food... when all I want is him.

‘Come.’ He smiles.

I have never seen him like this... and it is a joy to behold. I find myself walking beside him... hand in hand... with a stupid... silly grin plastered on my face. It reminds me of when I was ten and spending the day in Disneyland with Ray. It was a perfect day... and this is Sue shaping out to be the same?

Back in the car... as we head back along with me... 95 towards Savannah...
my phone alarm goes off. Oh yes... my pill.

‘What’s that?’ RICHARD C. MAST asks... curious... glancing at me.

I fumble in my purse for the packet.

‘Alarm for my pill...’ I mutter as my cheeks flush.

His lips quirk up.

‘Good... well done. I hate condoms.’

I flush some more. He is as patronizing as ever.

‘I like that you introduced me to Mark as your girlfriend...’ I murmur.

‘Isn’t that what you are?’ He raises an eyebrow.

‘Am I? I thought you wanted a submissive.’

‘So did I... Merry... and I do. But I have told you... I want more... too.’

Oh my. He is coming around... and hope surges through me... leaving me
breathless.

‘I’m incredibly happy that you want more...’ I whisper.

‘We aim to please... Miss Merry.’ He smirks as we pull into the
International House of Pancakes.

‘OLIVE GARDEN.’ I grin back at him. I do not believe it. Who would have thought... RICHARD C. MAST... at OLIVE GARDEN?

It is 8:30 a. m. but quiet in the restaurant. It smells of sweet batter...

fried food... and disinfectant. Hmm... not such an enticing aroma.

RICHARD C. MAST leads me to a booth.



‘I would never have pictured you here...’ I say as we slide into a booth.

‘My dad used to bring us to one of these whenever my mom went away at a medical conference. It was our secret.’ He smiles at me... gray eyes dancing... then picks up a menu... running a hand through his wayward hair as he stares down at it.

Oh... I want to run my hands through that hair. I pick up a menu and examine it. I realize I am starving.

‘I know what I want...’ he breathes... his voice low and husky.

I glance up at him... and he is staring at me in that way that tightens all the muscles in my belly and takes my breath away... his eyes dark and smoldering. Holy shit. I gaze at him... my blood singing in my veins answering his call.

‘I want what you want...’ I whisper.

He inhales sharply.

‘Here?’ He asks suggestively... raising an eyebrow at me... smiling wickedly... his teeth trapping the tip of his tongue.

Oh my... sex in OLIVE GARDEN. His expression changes... growing darker.

‘Don’t bite your lip...’ he orders. ‘Not here... not now.’ His eyes harden momentarily... and for a moment... he looks so deliciously dangerous. ‘If I can’t have you here... don’t tempt me.’

‘Hi... My name’s Leandra... What can I get for you... er... folks... er... today... this morning...?’ Her voice trails off... stumbling over her words as she gets an eye full of Mr. Beautiful opposite me. She flushes scarlet... and a small ounce of sympathy for her bubbles unwelcome into my consciousness because he still does that to me. Her presence allows me to escape briefly from his sensual glare.

‘Merry?’

He prompts me... ignoring her... and I do not think anyone could squeeze as much carnality into my name as he does at that moment.

I swallow... praying that I do not go the same color as poor Leandra.

‘I told you... I want what you want.’ I keep my voice soft... low... and he looks at me hungrily. Jeez... my inner goddess swoons. Am I up to this game?

Leandra looks from me to him and back again. She is the same color as her shiny red hair.

‘Shall I give you folks another minute to decide?’

‘No. We know what we want.’ RICHARD C. MAST’s mouth twitches with a small... sexy smile.

‘We’ll have two portions of the original buttermilk pancakes with maple syrup and bacon on the side... two glasses of orange juice... one black coffee with skim milk... and one English breakfast tea... if you have it...’ says RICHARD C. MAST... not taking his eyes off me.

Thank you, sir. Will that be all?’ Leandra whispers... looking anywhere but at the two of us. We both turn to stare at her... and she flushes crimson again and scuttles away.

‘You know it’s not fair.’ I glance down at the Formica tabletop...

Tracing a pattern in it with my index finger... trying to sound nonchalant.

‘What’s not fair?’

‘How you disarm people. Women. Me.’

‘Do I disarm you?’

I snort.

‘All the time.’

‘It just looks... Merry...’ he says mildly. ‘No... RICHARD C. MAST... it is much more than that.’ His brow creased.

‘You disarm me... Miss Merry. Your innocence. It cuts through all the crap.’

‘Is that why you’ve changed your mind?’

‘Changed my mind?’

‘Yes... about ... err... us?’

He strokes his chin thoughtfully with his long... skilled fingers.

I do not think I have changed my mind per se. We just need to redefine our parameters... re-draw our battle lines... if you will. We can make this work... I am Sue. I want you submissive in my playroom. I will punish you if you digress from the rules. Other than that, well... It is all up for discussion. Those are my requirements... Miss Merry. What say you to that?’

‘So, I get to sleep with you? In your bed?’

‘Is that what you want?’

‘Yes.’

‘I agree then. Besides... I sleep very well when you are in my bed. I had no idea.’ His brow creases as his voice fades.

‘I was frightened you’d leave me if I didn’t agree to all of it...’ I whisper.

‘I am not going anywhere... Merry. Besides...’ He trails off... and after some thought... he adds.’ We are following your advice... your definition: compromise. You emailed it to me. And so far, it is working for me.’

'I love that you want more...' I murmur shyly.

'I know.'

'How do you know?'

Trust me. I just do.' He smirks at me. He is hiding something.

What?

At that moment... Leandra arrives with breakfast and our conversation ceases. My stomach rumbles... reminding me how ravenous I am. RICHARD C. MAST watches with annoying approval as I devour everything on my plate.

'Can I treat you?' I ask RICHARD C. MAST.

'Treat me how?'

'Pay for this meal.' RICHARD C. MAST snorts.

'I don't think so.' he scoffs. 'Please. I want to.' He frowns at me.

'Are you trying to completely emasculate me?'

'This is probably the only place that I'll be able to afford to pay.' 'Merry... I appreciate the thought. I do. But no.' I purse my lips.

'Don't scowl...' he threatens... his eyes glinting ominously.

Of course, he does not ask me for my mother's address. He knows it already... stalker that he is. When he pulls up outside the house... I do not comment. What is the point?

'Do you want to come in?' I ask shyly.



'I need to work... Merry... but I will be back this evening. What time?'

I ignore the unwelcome stab of disappointment. Why do I want to spend every single minute with this controlling sex god? Oh yes... I have fallen in love with him... and he can fly.

'Thank you... for the more.'

'My pleasure... Merry.' He kisses me... and I inhale his sexy RICHARD C. MAST smell.

'I'll see you later.'

'Try and stop me...' he whispers.

I wave goodbye as he drives off into the Modern city sunshine. I am still wearing his sweatshirt and his underwear... and I am too warm.

In the kitchen... my mom is in a complete flap. It is not every day she has to entertain a multi... zillionaire... and it is stressing her out.

‘How are you... darling?’ She asks... and I flush because she must know what I was doing last night.

‘I am good. RICHARD C. MAST took me gliding this morning.’ I hope the added information will distract her.

‘Gliding? As in a small stifling air balloon with no engine? That sort of gliding?’ I nod.

‘Wow.’

She is speechless... a novel concept for my mother. She gapes at me... but eventually recovers herself and resumes her original line of questioning.

‘How was it last night? Did you talk?’ I flush bright scarlet.

‘We talked... last night and today. It is getting better.’

‘Good.’ She turns her attention back to the four cookery books she has open on the kitchen table.

‘Mom... if you like... I will cook this evening.’

‘Oh... honey... that’s kind of you... but I want to do it.’

‘Okay.’ I grimace... knowing full well that my mother’s cooking is haphazard. She is improved since she moved to Savannah with Bob. There was a time I would not subject anyone to her cooking... even... who do I hate? Oh yes... Stifler's

mom... Elly. Well... her. Will I ever meet this damned woman? I decide to send a quick thank... you to RICHARD C. MAST.

Interval: 5 Reverie

1

It was Saturday and she knew there were a lot of things a girl her age could be doing, there were so many memories and happy moments filling this room I am in trying to stay awake. I sat up rubbing the last of sleep out her eyes trying to savor the last bit of sweetness she had behind her eyelids. It had been a lovely and sweet dream and right before it had it is a wonderful ending her Mom burst through with her bright idea, of her being too young and innocent.

Sometimes... you know how to show a girl an enjoyable time. Said Mary. I will take either of those over your snoring. I had an enjoyable time too. But I always do when I am with you. He spoke. She also then replayed- I DO NOT SNORE. And if I do... it is very ungallant of you to point it out. You are no gentleman Mr.

-And-

...You are in the Deep South too! Said, Marry.

I have never claimed to be a gentleman... Merry... and I think I have demonstrated that point to you on numerous occasions. I am not intimidated by your SHOUTY capitals. But I will confess to a small white lie: No... you do not snore... but you do talk. And it is fascinating.

What happened to my kiss?

Holy shit I thought. I know I talk in my sleep. Katie has told me enough times. What have I said? Oh no.

So-o... What did I just say?

No kisses for you until you talk! You are not a gentleman, as I thought, you are a cad and a scoundrel... it would be most ungallant of me to say... and I have already been chastised for that. But if you behave yourself... I may tell you this evening. I do have to go to a meeting now. Baby, I will be seeing you... The RICHARD C. MAST... meaning the big chief executive officer, the highest-ranking person in a company or other institution, responsible for making managerial decisions. OMG! THE- RICHARD C. MAST... Cad and Scoundrel... ...Undertaking Department Inc. Right! Jeez-la-Wez-z- I shall maintain radio silence until this evening. I fume. Supposing I have said I hate him... or worse still... that I love him... in my sleep.

Like- could be hanging with her friends at the mall, or she could stay at home making drawings or doing homework; That is what Marry thought smiling to herself, and that made every minute spent even more special over him being so confusing.

My mom has decided on gazpacho soup and a barbecue with steaks marinated in olive oil... garlic... and lemon. RICHARD C. MAST likes meat... and it is simple to do. Bob has volunteered to man the BBQ grill. What is it about men and

fire...? I ponder as I trail after my mother through the supermarket with the shopping cart.

As we browse the raw meat cabinet... my phone rings. I scramble for it... thinking it may be RICHARD C. MAST. I do not recognize the number.

‘Hello?’ I answer breathlessly. ‘Marry Sue?’ ‘Yes- I said.’ ‘It’s Elizabeth Morgan from Systematic Investment’ ‘Oh... hello.’

‘I am calling to offer you the job of assistant to Mr. Jack Hyde. We would like you to start on Monday.’ ‘Wow- I said. That is great! Thank you!’

‘You know the salary details?’ ‘Yes- Yes... that’s... I mean... I accept your offer. I would love to come and work for you.’ ‘That is excellent, we- I will see you on Monday at 9:35 a. m.’ ‘See you then, and goodbye. And thank you.’ I beam at my mom. ‘You have a job?’

I nod gleefully... and she squeals and hugs me in the middle of a public supermarket.

‘Congratulations... darling! We must buy some champagne!’ She is clapping her hands and jumping up and down. Is she forty...? Two or twelve?

I glance down at my phone and frown... there are a missed call from RICHARD C. MAST. He never phones me. I call him straight back.

‘Merry...’ he answers immediately.

‘Hi...’ I murmur shyly.

‘I must return to NY. Something comes up. I am on my way to Hilton Head now. Please apologize to your mother... I cannot make dinner.’ He sounds very businesslike.

‘Nothing serious... I hope?’

‘I have a situation which I must deal with. I will see you on Friday. I will send Peter to collect you from the airport if I cannot come myself.’ He sounds cold. Angry even. But for the first time... I do not immediately think it is me. ‘Okay. I hope you sort out your situation. Have a safe flight.’

‘You too... baby...’ he breathes... and with those words... my RICHARD C. MAST is back briefly. Then he hangs up.

Oh no. The last ‘situation’ he had was my virginity. Jeez... I hope it is nothing like that.

I gaze at my mom. Her earlier jubilation has metamorphosed into concern.

‘It is RICHARD C. MAST... he has had to go back to NY. He apologizes.’

‘Oh! That is a shame... darling. We can still have our barbecue... and now we have something to celebrate... your new job! You must tell me all about it.’

It is a late afternoon... and Mom and I are lying beside the pool. My mother has relaxed to the point where she is horizontal now that Mr. Megabucks is not

coming to dinner. As I lie in the sun... endeavoring to lose the pale... I think about yesterday evening and breakfast today. I think about RICHARD C. MAST... and my ridiculous grin refuses to subside. It keeps creeping across my face... unbidden and disconcerting... as I recall our various conversations and what we did... what he did.

Her body remained facing forward in deep thoughts, but she leaned ever so slightly into his direction to his picture on her nightstand table; there seems to be a tidal shift in RICHARD C. MAST's attitude. He denies it but... he admits he is trying for more. What could have changed? What has altered since he sent his long email and when I saw him yesterday? What has he done?

I sit up suddenly... almost spilling my Dr. Pepper.

He had dinner with... her. Elly. Holy Freak! My scalp prickles on my plate, at the realization of needing him always. Did she say something to him I do not want him looking or talking to anyone- I want him all to me. Oh... to have been a fly on the wall during their dinner. I could have landed in her soup or on her wine glass and choked her. 'What is it... Merry... honey?' Mom asks... startled from her torpor. 'I am just having a moment... Mom. What time is it?'

'About 6:30 p. m... darling.'

Hm-m... he will not have landed yet. Can I ask him? Should I ask him? Or she has nothing to do with it. I fervently hope so. What did I say in my sleep? Crap... some unguarded remark while dreaming about him... I bet? Whatever it is... or was... I hope the sea of change is coming from within him and not because of her.

I am sweltering in this damned heat. I need another dip in the pool. As I get ready for bed... I switch on my computer.

I have heard nothing from the RICHARD C. MAST. Not even a word that he arrived safely. Thinking of his voice deep and raspy, and me sometimes, almost emotionless, demanding answers I felt bad about me being me- She fought against the goosebumps that threatened to raise on her skin as she turned her head towards him thought of him.

Oh... I hope not. I am not ready to tell him that... and I am so- sure he is not ready to hear it... if he ever wants to hear it. I scowl at my computer and decide that whatever I cook... I will make bread.

(Time has passed)

She opened her eyes then, turning her body towards photo- why do I get to torture myself like this? Her mother nodded her confidence that had been there earlier was beginning to fade. Fear and determination gripped them that her mom was right about everything. I am starting to worry. I sent a text message- 'Please let me know that you have arrived safely, and I am thinking of you.' She closed her eyes, trying to calm her heart, yet reveling in the feelings he caused within her. She brought her bottom lip between her teeth... They were nearly touching yet it was just a photo she was kissing missing him, and she came close to pulling him to her heart, finding out if he felt as good as he did in her mind, that was off in link for the time being. Her eyes

were slightly glazed- lovesick, and he could only guess- to what she was doing at that very moment, that it was more from desire than they could take.

Three minutes later... I hear the ping from my email inbox. I was thinking- about getting it... my mind racing- If he only really knew I was 12, in eighth grade, and it was a school night if only he knew he was my dream man- and my dreams in my mind and out. I was taking my nightly shower upstairs- now in the only bathroom- I was wet and my mom was in the next room wanting me to get done and be done. like me wanting now to go downstairs watch some TV before 10:00 p.m. The bathroom had one small window- were the boy next door I am sure like to look in at me, and the fan was not able to keep up with the humidity- so everything was steamy, so the door was left open a crack- do not care anymore about my nakedness, after being F*UCKED by him- at only 12- yet I said I was of age- when we bathed or showered afterward too. It had been that way since forever- after the first time.

When the show on TV ended, it was my bedtime and I went upstairs. The hall was dark, but I did not bother turning on the light. The door to my room was in the middle of the hallway, on the left. The door to the bathroom was at the end of the hallway, on the right. As I approached my room, there was a movement in the bathroom that caught my attention thinking I should pee one last time- and change my tampon. The door was open a bit wider than usual, but I did not seem to care as if I was like a woman.

More likely, it was puberty torturing me with its omnipresent sense for the opposite sex- not having to go through what I do. I stood in the doorway to my room, but I did not turn on the light. I knew everyone would not be able to see me in the dark if I stayed out of the line of brightness cast by the bathroom light onto the hallway wall. That tells me I knew from the start that what I was doing was wrong.

What I was doing was watching myself, naked, fresh from the shower, rubbing moisturizing lotion on myself again. I could not see much of it in the glass, and only the side yet it was more than I could take, but by moving my head a little this way and that I was able to keep one of my breasts in vision.

The sexual and it was far more than my fantasies coming true, reading the text, at the same time; Dear Miss Marry- I have arrived safely... and please accept my apologies for not letting you know. I do not want to cause you any worry... it is heartwarming to know that you care for me. I am thinking of you too and as ever looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Sexual pleasure, she was feeling her nipples now, pinching them lightly then harder and then pulling on them and shaking her small tits in wonderful waves of flesh. I was wearing drawstring pants with an elasticized waist. Without conscious thought, I pulled the bow out of the drawstring, slipped my hand inside the waistband, and began stroking myself with my open palm. Erect nipple in perfect profile I give Snapchats back. I sigh... RICHARD C. MAST is back to formality- yet SO- HOT! I start to daydream even more.

My hand slide over her ribs and her belly and down, out the sight of me and the thoughts of him with me as he was before.

The thought of what she was going to do was more than I could bear. I opened my legs a step, turning slightly and I could see the hair between my legs.

The crack was fully open- to my bothers looking in there a bed in the next room, now and I wanted them to know- in the door they stood- I rarely saw anyone- yet this time- I did, there and when I did, it troubled me- if I looked too long- yet it was a new turn on now so in love and not care about felling shame- the shame of loving me was gone.

I pressed my fingers into 'her' the mysteriousness. With no effort, the fingers slipped inside until I could not see them at all. I shut my eyes and froze my hand, afraid to move- as my mom walks past and said nothing. I could not cum out here- just over a text message.

It must have only taken her a second for me to let out. I have climaxed as soon as I touched my clitoris after just removing the unseen fingers. The door opens as wide as me, flooding the hallway with light from the lit bathroom. I stepped out, bathrobe on but open. I was caught. I stared at them all- feeling like a woman- they stared back- not saying a word. I pulled my robe off. I burst into tears- like a girl. It was the first time I had cried since last night- I spun around, sobbing, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry,' and went inside my room. I slammed the door closed and left the light off- now feeling the shame.

Dear Mr...

It is very evident that I care for you deeply more than you would even know in deepness. How could you doubt that- ever? I hope your 'situation' is at hand.

Your Marry XO, PS: Are you going to tell me what I said in my sleep? Dear Miss- Marry, I like very much that you care about me. The 'situation' here is not yet resolved. Concerning your PS: The answer is... No.

I hope it was amusing. But you should know I cannot accept any responsibility for what comes out of my mouth when I am unconscious. You misheard me. A man of your advanced years is usually a little deaf. I now on my phone whispering

Asking- Sorry... could you speak up? I cannot hear you. So now it was back to him in my mind and then in my dreams.

Then it was said- I intend to do exactly that on Friday evening. Looking so forward to it!

I would rather hear you say the words that you uttered in your sleep when you are conscious... that is why I will not tell you. Go to sleep. You will need to be rested with what I have in mind for you tomorrow.

(Goodnight-)

Dark shadows of exasperating. I clamber into bed and lie glaring at the ceiling as my eyes adjust to the dark. I hear another ping from my computer. I am not going to look. No not. No... I am not going to look. Gah! Like the fool I am... I cannot resist the lure of RICHARD C. MAST's words.

-And-

My mother hugs me tightly.

'Follow your heart... darling... and please... please... try not to over... think things. Relax and enjoy yourself. You are so young... sweetheart. You have so much of life to experience yet... just let it happen. You deserve the best of everything.' Her heartfelt words are comforting whispered in my ear.

She kisses my hair.

'Oh... Mom.' Hot... unwelcome tears prick my eyes as I cling to her.

'Darling... you know what they say. You must kiss a lot of frogs before you find your prince.'

I give her a lopsided... bittersweet smile.

'I think I've kissed a prince... Mom- like- I hope he doesn't turn into a frog.'

She gives me her a- most endearing... motherly... absolute... Unconditional....love smile... and I marvel at the love I feel for this woman as we hug again.

'Merry... they're calling your flight...' dad's voice is anxious.

‘Will you visit... Mom?’

‘Of course, darling... soon. Love you.’

‘Me too.’

Her eyes are red with unshed tears as she releases me. I hate leaving her. I hug dad... and turning... head to the gate... I do not have time for the first-class lounge today. I will myself not to glance back. But I do... and Bob is holding my mom... and tears are streaming down her face. I can no longer hold mine back. I put my head down and proceed to the gate... keeping my eyes on the shiny... white floor... blurred through my watery tears.



Once onboard... in the luxury of first-class... was in my mind of the woman I could become- and never have to work- I curl up in my bed in dreaming and try to compose myself.

It is always painful to wrench myself away from Mom even after moments like moments before... she is scatty... disorganized... but newly insightful... and she loves me.

Unconditional love... what every child deserves from their parents. I frown at my wayward thoughts... and pulling out my iPhone... stare at it despondently.

What does RICHARD C. MAST know of love? Seems he did not get the unconditional love he was entitled to during his exceedingly early years.

My heart twists... and my mother's words waft like a zephyr through my mind: Yes... Merry. Hell... what do you need? ... a neon sign flashing on his forehead? She thinks RICHARD C. MAST loves me... but then she is my mother... of course she would think that. She thinks I deserve the best of everything. I frown. It is true... and in a moment of startling clarity... I see it. It is amazingly simple: I want his love. I need RICHARD C. MAST... to love me. Therefore, I am so reticent about our relationship... because on some basic... fundamental level... I recognize within me a deep... seated compulsion to be loved and cherished.

-And-

Because of his Dark Shadows... I am holding myself back. The bondage, discipline (or domination), sadism, and masochism, is a distraction from the real issue. Yet, I love him! So, I will take it like a woman, not a girl!

The sex is amazing... he is wealthy... he is beautiful... but this is all meaningless without his love... and that is what I want the most- is love and slow and caring- and the real heart... fail is that I do not know if he is capable of love? I question everything I have done.

He does not even love himself. I recall his self... loathing... her love being the only form he found... acceptable. Punished... whipped... beaten... whatever their relationship entailed... he feels undeserving of love. Why does he feel like that? How can he feel like that? His words haunt me: 'It's extremely hard to grow up in a perfect family when you're not perfect.'

I close my eyes... imagining his pain... and I cannot begin to comprehend it. I shudder as I remember that I may have divulged too much. What have I confessed to RICHARD C. MAST in my sleep? What secrets have I revealed?

I stare at the phone in the future hope's that it will give me some answers about what I need to do for him to love me more than he does. Much unsurprising or not... it is not very forthcoming. As we have not taken off yet... I decided to email my Dark Shadows that creep in my mind.

(Time passes)

I am once again ensconced in first-class... on lavish dates and balls parties, for which I- thank you. I am counting the minutes until I see you this evening... and find the deeper truth out of you about my nocturnal admissions of falling ever-so for you and need feeling as I want.

'Pull down your pantyhose and underwear.' At first, he did not seem to be doing anything. His long perfect finger poked my stomach. 'I told you I am not going to f*ck you. Do what I say.' I pulled down my underwear and pantyhose. The skin on my face and throat was hot and pink like below and above, but my fingertips were cold and icy on my legs as I did what he asked. I thought I might faint or spit up, but I did not. So many feelings of suspension dizzying me, like the one I have in dreams where I can fly like angles, but only if I get into some weird position as he has me in now. I became aware of a small frenzy of expended energy behind me.

My hips were sprayed with hot sticky muck the dream was over- too soon. 'Go clean yourself off,' he said. Stickiness- I thought as I stood slowly and shyly- and felt my skirt fall of goo. Now pulling underwear pantyhose back up since I was going to use the bathroom anyway and need to. He did not close the door behind me- looking at me on the pot, and the second unusual thing occurred- I had blended orgasms- I could come back to the bedroom and masturbate on his bed and then go back to my room- like a good girl- then he would love me more- and never- ever- stop.

(I did not hear from him in a week)

The aircraft doors are still open- he not happy. You may stow your twitchy palm for now. We are delayed but only by ten minutes. My welfare and that of the passengers around me is vouchsafed. I miss you and your smart mouth missy. 'I am safely homework is over for now.'

They are shutting the doors as we walk down the tarmac. You will not hear another peep from me about work or formalities... especially given your deafness of me telling some work beneath me off- about time- and the sin of not making it.

I switch off the phone he has given me... unable to shake my anxiety for the moments of being a young girl and falling into his arms like a child. Something is up with him I just know.

I switch off the Phone... unable to shake my anxiety. Something is up with the RICHARD C. MAST. Perhaps 'the situation' is out of hand. Glancing up at the locker where my bags are stowed in my school day. Then- I sit back... in class in a

daydream. I- Marry this morning... with my mother's help... to buy the RICHARD C. MAST a small gift to say thank you for first-class and the gliding.

I smile at the memory of the soaring and the love I have never had or felt... that was something else to me and still is.

I do not know yet if I will give my silly gift to him. He might think it is childish... and if he is in a strange mood... not. I am both eager to return and apprehensive of what awaits me at my journey's end. As I mentally flick through all the scenarios that could be 'the situation'... I become aware that once again the only empty seat is beside me. I shake my head as the thought crosses my mind that RICHARD C. MAST might have purchased the adjacent seat so that I could not talk to anyone. I dismiss the idea as ridiculous... no one could be that controlling... that jealous... Surely- I close my eyes as the stifling air balloon taxis towards the runway.

I emerge into the Sea... Tac arrivals terminal eight hours later to find Peter waiting and holding up a board that reads Miss A Merry. Honestly! But it is good to see him.

3

'Hello... Peter- just outside the classy 1930's antique limousine.'

'Miss Merry...' he greets me formally... but I see a hint of a smile in his sharp brown eyes.

He looks his usual immaculate self... smart charcoal suit... white shirt... and gray tie.

‘I do know what you look like Peter... you don’t need a board... and I do wish you’d call me... Merry.’

‘Merry- please-Can I take your bags...?’ ‘No... I can Marry. Thank you.’ His lips tighten perceptibly.

‘But... if you’d be more comfortable taking them...’ I stammer.

‘Thank you.’ He grabs my backpack and my newly acquired wheelee case for the clothes my mother has bought me.’ This way... ma’am.’

I sigh- lightly- He is so polite. I remember... though I would like to erase it from my memory... that this man has bought me underwear. In fact, and the thought unsettles me... he is the only man who is ever bought me underwear. We walk in silence to the blackness outside in the airport parking lot... and he holds the door open for me. I clamber in... wondering if wearing such a short skirt for the return to NY was a clever idea when I only have two days before- I need to back home.

It was cool and welcome to the Modern city. Here I feel exposed. Once Peter has stowed my bags in the trunk...

The journey is slow... caught up in rush hour traffic. Peter keeps his eyes on the road ahead. I can bear the silence no longer, taciturn does not begin to describe him.

‘How’s is the... Peter?’

‘Mr... is preoccupied... Miss Merry.’

Oh... this must be ‘the situation.’ I am mining a seam of gold.

‘Preoccupied?’

‘Yes... ma’am.’

I frown at Peter... and he glances at me in the rear... view mirror... our eyes meet in the glass of the car. He is saying no more. Jeez... he can be as tightlipped as the control freak himself.

‘Is he okay?’

‘I believe so... ma’am.’

‘Are you more comfortable calling me... Miss Merry?’

‘Yes... ma’am.’

‘Oh... okay.’

Well... that curtails our conversation... and we continue in silence. I begin to think that Peter’s recent slip... when he told me that he had been hell on wheels... was an anomaly. He is embarrassed about it... worried that he has been disloyal. The silence is suffocating.

‘Could you put some music on please?’

‘Certainly... ma’am. What would you like to hear?’

‘Something soothing.’

I see a smile play on Peter’s lips as our eyes meet briefly again in the mirror.

‘Yes... ma’am.’

He pushes a few buttons on the steering wheel... and the gentle strains of Pachelbel’s canon fill the space between us. Oh yes... this is what I need.

‘Thank you.’ I sit back as we drive slowly but steadily along the I... 5 a.m. and in NY.

Twenty... five minutes... later he drops me outside the impressive façade that is the entrance to his mansion.

‘In- you go... ma’am...’ he says... holding the door open for me.’ I will mention your luggage is.’ The expression is soft... warm... avuncular even.

Jeez... Uncle Peter... what a thought.

‘Thank you for meeting me.’

‘It’s a pleasure... Miss Merry.’ He smiles... and I head into the building. The door attendant nods and waves.

As I ride up to the thirtieth floor... a thousand butterflies stretch their wings and flutter erratically in my stomach. Why am I so nervous?

-And-

I know it is because I have no idea what kind of mood RICHARD C. MAST's going to be in when I arrive. My inner goddess is hopeful for one type of mood... my subconscious... like me... is fraught with nerves.

The elevator doors open... and I am in the foyer. It is so strange not to be met by Peter. Of course, he is parking the car. In the great room... RICHARD C. MAST is on his Phone talking quietly as he stares out of the glass doors at the early New York skyline.

He is wearing a white suit with the jacket undone... and he is running his hand through his gray-black hair... he is. He agitated... tense even.

Oh no... What is wrong? Agitated or not... he is still beyond beautiful. How can he look so... arresting? It is such a pleasure to stand and drink in the sheer sight of him.' No Trace... Okay... Yes.' He turns and sees me... and his whole demeanor changes. From tension to relief to something else: a look that calls directly to my inner goddess... a look of sensual carnality... gray eyes blazing.

My mouth goes dry and desires blooms in my body... whoa.

'Keep me informed...' he snaps and shuts off his phone as he strides purposefully toward me. I stand paralyzed as he closes the distance between us... devouring me with his eyes. Holy shit... something is amiss... the strain in his jaw... the anxiety around his eyes. He shrugs out of his jacket... undoes his dark tie... and

slings them both onto the coach en route to me. Then his arms are wrapped around me... and he is pulling me to him... hard... fast... gripping my ponytail to tilt my head up... kissing me as his life depends on it.

What? He drags the hair tie painfully out of my hair... but I do not care. There is a desperate... primal quality to his kiss. He needs me... for whatever reason... at this point... and I have never felt so desired and coveted. It is dark and sensual and alarming all at the same time. I kiss him back with equal fervor... my fingers twisting and fisting in his hair. Our tongues entwined... our passion and ardor erupting between us. He tastes divine... hot... sexy... and his scent... all body wash and RICHARD C. MAST is so arousing. He drags his mouth away from mine... and he is staring down at me... gripped by some unnamed emotion.

‘What’s wrong?’ I breathe.

‘I am so glad you are back. Shower with me... now.’ I cannot decide if it is a request or a command.

‘Yes...’ I whisper... and he grabs my hand... leading me out of the spacious room into his bedroom to his bathroom.

Once there... he releases me and sets the water running in the far too spacious shower.

Turning slowly... he gazes at me... eyes hooded.

‘I like your skirt. It is noticeably short...’ he says... his voice low.’ You have great legs.’

He steps out of his shoes and reaches down to take each of his socks off... never taking his eyes off me. I am rendered speechless by the look of hunger in his eyes. Wow... to be this wanted by this Greek god. I mirror his actions and step out of my black flats. Suddenly... he reaches for me... backing me up against the wall. Kissing me... my face... my throat... my lips... running his hands into my hair. I feel the cool... smooth tiled wall at my back as he pushes himself against me so that I am flattened between his heat and the chill of the ceramic. Tentatively... I place my arms on his upper arms... and he groans as I squeeze tightly.

‘I want you now. Here... fast... hard...’ he breathes... and his hands are on my thighs... pushing up my skirt.’ Are you still bleeding?’ ‘No.’ I flush.

‘Good.’

His thumbs hook over my white cotton panties... and abruptly he drops to his knees as he tugs them off. My skirt is now rucked up so that I am naked from the waist down and panting... wanting. He grabs my hips... pushing me against the wall again... and kisses me at the apex of my thighs. Grabbing my upper thighs... he forces my legs apart. I groan loudly... feeling his tongue circling my clitoris. Oh my. Tipping my head back involuntarily... I moan as my fingers find their way into this hair.

His tongue is relentless... strong and insistent... leaving me... swirling round and round... repeatedly... no... stop. It is exquisite... the intensity of feeling... it is

almost painful. My body starts to quicken... and he releases me. What? No! My breathing is ragged as I pant... gazing at him with delicious anticipation. He grabs my face with both hands... holding me firmly... and he kisses me hard... thrusting his tongue into my mouth so I can taste my arousal.

Unzipping his fly... he frees himself... grabs the backs of my thighs... and lifts me.

'Wrap your legs around me... baby...' he commands... his voice urgent... strained.



I do as I am told and wrap my arms around his neck... and he moves quickly and sharply... filling me. Ah! He gasps... and I groan. Holding my behind... his fingers digging into my soft flesh... he begins to move... slowly at first... a steady even tempo... but as his control unravels... he speeds up... faster... and faster. Ah-h! I tip my head back and concentrate on the invading... punishing... heavenly sensation... pushing me... pushing me... onward... higher... up... and when I can take no more... I explode around him... spiraling into an intense... all... consuming orgasm. He lets go with a deep growl... and he buries his head in my neck as he buries himself inside me... groaning loudly and incoherently as he finds his release.

His breathing is erratic... but he kisses me tenderly... not moving... still inside me... and I blink... unseeing into his eyes. As he comes into focus... he gently pulls out of me... holding me steady while I place my feet on the floor.

The bathroom is now cloudy with steam... and hot. I feel overdressed.

‘You seem pleased to see me...’ I murmur with a shy smile.

His lips quirk up.

‘Yes... Miss Merry... My pleasure is self... evident. Come... let me get you in the shower.’

He undoes the next three buttons of his shirt... removes the cufflinks... tugs it over his head... and discards it on the floor. Removing his suit pants and boxer briefs... he kicks them to one side. He begins to undo the buttons on my blouse while I watch him... yearning to reach out and stroke his chest... but I contain myself.

‘How was your journey?’ he asks mildly. He seems so much calmer now... his apprehension gone... dissolved by sexual congress.

‘Fine... thank you...’ I murmur... still breathless. ‘Thanks once again for the first class. It is a much nicer way to travel.’ I smile shyly at him. ‘I have some news...’ I added nervously.

‘Oh?’ he looks down at me as he undoes the last button... slips me

blouse down my arms... and throws it on top of his discarded clothes.

‘I have a job.’

He stills... then smiles at me... his eyes warm and soft.

‘Congratulations... Miss Merry. Now, will you tell me where?’ He teases.

‘You don’t know?’

He shakes his head... frowning slightly.

‘Why would I know?’

‘With your stalking capabilities... I thought you might have...’ I trail off as his face falls.

‘Merry... I would not dream of interfering in your career... unless you ask me to... of course.’ He looks wounded.

‘So, you have no idea which company?’

‘No. I know there are four publishing companies in NY... so I am assuming it’s one of them.’

‘SIP’

‘Oh... the small one... good. Well done.’ He leans forward and kisses my forehead.

‘Clever girl. When do you start?’

‘Monday.’

‘That soon... eh? I had better take advantage of you while I still can. Turn around.’

I am thrown by his casual command... but do as I am bid... and he undoes my bra and unzips my skirt. He pushes my skirt down... cupping my behind as he does... and kissing my shoulder. He leans against... I and his nose nuzzle my hair... inhaling deeply. He squeezes my buttocks.

‘You intoxicate me... Miss Merry... and you calm me. Such a heady combination.’ He kisses my hair. Grabbing my hand... he tugs me into the shower.

‘Ow...’ I squeal. The water is practically scalding. RICHARD C. MAST grins down at me as the water cascades over him.

‘It’s only a little hot water.’

And he is right. It feels heavenly... washing off the sticky Modern city morning and the stickiness from our lovemaking.

‘Turn around...’ he orders... and I comply... turning to face the wall.’ I want to wash you...’ he murmurs and reaches for the body wash. He squirts a little into his hand.

‘I have something else to tell you...’ I murmur as his hands start on my shoulders.

‘Oh... yes?’ he asks mildly.

I steel myself with a deep breath.

‘My friend José’s photography show is opening Thursday in Portland.’

He stills... his hands hovering over my breasts. I have emphasized the word ‘friend.’ ‘Yes... what about it?’ He asks sternly and too harshly.

‘I said I would go. Do you want to come with me?’

After what feels like a monumental amount of time... he slowly starts washing me again.

‘What time?’

‘The opening is at 7:30 p. m.’ He kisses my ear.

‘Okay.’

Inside my subconscious relaxes and then collapses... slumped into an old, battered armchair.

‘Were you nervous about asking me?’

‘Yes. How can you tell?’

‘Merry... your whole bodies just relaxed...’ he says dryly.

‘Well... you just are um... on the jealous side.’

‘Yes... I am...’ he says darkly.’ And you would do well to remember that.

But thank you for asking. We will take Charlie Tango.'

Oh... the helicopter of course... silly me. More flying... cool! I grin.

'Can I wash you?' I ask.

'I don't think so...' he murmurs... and he kisses me gently on my neck to take the sting out of his refusal. I pout at the wall as he caresses my back with soap.

'Will you ever let me touch you?' I ask boldly.

He stills again... his hand on my behind.

'Put your hands on the wall Merry. I am going to take you again...' he murmurs in my ear as he grabs my hips... and I know that the discussion is over.

Later we are seated at the breakfast bar... dressed in bathrobes...

having consumed Mrs. Jones rather than excellent pasta alle vongole.

'More wine?' RICHARD C. MAST asks... gray eyes glowing.

'A small glass... please.' The Sancerre is crisp and delicious. RICHARD C. MAST pours one for me and one for himself.

'How's the um... the situation that bought you to NY?' I ask tentatively. He frowns.

'Out of hand...' he murmurs bitterly.' But nothing for you to worry about... Merry. I have plans for you this evening.'

‘Oh?’

‘Yes. I want you ready and waiting in my playroom in fifteen minutes.’ He stands and gazes down at me.

‘You can get ready in your room. Incidentally... the walk... in the closet is now full of clothes for you. I do not want any arguments about them.’ He narrows his eyes... daring me to say something. When I do not... he stalks off to his study.

Me! Argue? With you... Dark Shadows? It is more than my backside’s worth. I sit on the barstool... momentarily stupefied... trying to assimilate this morsel of information. He bought me clothes. I exaggeratedly roll my eyes knowing full well he cannot see me. Car... phone... computer... clothes... it will be a damn condominium next... and then I really will be his lover.

Ho yes! My subconscious has her snarky face on. I ignore her and make my way upstairs to my room so... it is still mine... why? I thought he had agreed to let me sleep with him. I suppose he is not used to sharing his personal space... but then... neither am I. I console myself with the thought that at least I have somewhere to escape from him.

Examining the door... It has a lock but no key. I wonder briefly if Mrs. Jones has a spare. I will ask her. I open the closet door and close it again quickly. Holy Crap... he is spent a fortune. It resembles Katie’s... so many clothes hanging neatly on the rail. Deep down... I know that they will all fit. But I have no time to think about

that... I must get kneeling in the Black and White Room of- Pain... or Pleasure...
hopefully this evening.

Kneeling by the door... I am naked except for my panties. My heart is in my mouth. Jeez... I thought of the bathroom he would have had enough. The man is insatiable... or all men are like him. I have no idea... no one to compare him to. Closing my eyes... I try to calm myself down... to connect with my inner sub. She is there somewhere... hiding behind my inner goddess.

Anticipation runs bubbling like soda through my veins. What will he do? I take a deep steadying breath... but I cannot deny it... I am excited... aroused... wet already. This is so... I want to think wrong... but somehow, it is not. It is right for RICHARD C. MAST. It is what he wants... and after the last few days..., he has done... I must be brave and take whatever he decides he wants... whatever he thinks he needs.

The memory of his look when I came in this evening... the longing in his face... his determined stride toward me like I was an oasis in the desert. I would do anything to see that look again. I press my thighs together at the delicious memory... and it reminds me that I need to spread my knees. I shuffle them apart. How long will he make me wait? The wait is crippling me...

crippling me with a dark and tantalizing desire. I glance around the subtly lit room; the cross... the table... the couch... the bench... that bed. It looks so large... and it is made of pink satin sheets. Which piece of apparatus will he use?

The door opens and RICHARD C. MAST breezes in... ignoring me completely. I glance down quickly... staring at my hands... positioned with care on my spread thighs. Placing something on the large chest beside the door... he strolls casually toward the bed. I indulge myself in a quick glimpse at him... and my heart lurches to a stop.

He is naked except for those soft ripped jeans... top button casually is undone and then there at his feet. Jeez... he looks so freaking hot. My subconscious is frantically fanning herself... and my inner goddess is swaying and writhing to some primal carnal rhythm. She is so ready. I lick my lips instinctively. My blood pounds through my body... thick and heavy with salacious hunger. What is he going to do to me?

Turning... he nonchalantly walks back to the chest of drawers.

Opening one... he begins to remove items and place them on the top. My curiosity burns... blazes even... but I resist the overwhelming temptation to sneak a quick peek. When he finishes what he is doing... he comes to stand in front of me. I can see his naked feet... and I want to kiss every inch of them... run my tongue over his instep... suck each of his toes. Holy shit.

'You look lovely...' he breathes.

I keep my head down... conscious that he is staring at me while I am naked. I feel the flush as it slowly spreads over my face. He bends down and cups my chin... forcing my face up to meet his gaze.

'You are one beautiful woman... Merry. And you are all mine...' he murmurs. 'Stand up.' His command is soft full of sensual promise.

Shakily... I get to my feet.

'Look at me...' he breathes... and I stare up into his smoldering gray gaze. It is his Dom gaze... cold... hard... and sexy as hell... seven shadows of sin in one enticing look. My mouth dries... and I know I will do anything he asks.

An almost cruel smile plays across his lips.

'We do not have a signed contract... Merry. But we have discussed limits.'

-And-

I want to re... iterate we have safe words... 'okay?'

Holy freak... what has he got planned that I need safe words?

'What are they?' he asks authoritatively.

I frown slightly at his question... and his face hardens perceptibly.

'What are the safe words... Merry?' he says slowly and deliberately.

'Yellow...' I mumble.

'And?' he prompts... his mouth set in a hard line.

'Red...' I breathe.

‘Remember those.’

And I cannot help it... I raise my eyebrow at him and am about to remind him of my GPA... but the sudden frosty glint in his icy gray eyes stops me in my tracks.

‘Do not start with your smart mouth in here... Miss Merry. Or I will-freak it with you on your knees. Do you understand?’

I swallow instinctively. Okay. I blink rapidly... chastened. Actually... it is his tone of voice... rather than the threat... that intimidates me.’ Well?’

‘Yes... Sir...’ I mumble hastily.

‘Good girl...’ he pauses as he stares at me.’ My intention is not that you should safely word because- you are in pain. What I intend to do to you will be intense. Very intense... and you must guide me. Do you understand?’ Not really. Intense? Wow.

‘This is about touch... Merry. You will not be able to see me or hear me. But you will be able to feel me.’

I frown... not hear him? How is that going to work? He turns... and I had not noticed that above the chest is a sleek... flat... matt... black box. As he waves his hand in front... the box splits in half: two doors slide open revealing a CD player and a host of buttons. RICHARD C. MAST presses several of these buttons in sequence. Nothing

happens... but he seems satisfied. I am mystified. When he turns to face me again... he wears his small I... have... a... secret smile.

‘I am going to tie you to that bed... Merry. But I am going to blindfold you first and...’ he reveals his iPod in his hand...’ you will not be able to hear me. All you will hear is the music I am going to play for you.’

Okay. A musical interlude... not what I was expecting. Does he ever do what I expect?

Jeez... I hope it is not rap.

‘Come.’ Taking my hand... he leads me over to the antique Hugh Hefner Naked Lady covered bed. There are shackles attached at each corner... fine metal chains with leather cuffs... glinting against the pink satin.

Oh boy... My heart is going to leave my chest... and I am melting from the inside out... desire coursing through me. Could I be any more excited?



‘Stand here.’

I am facing the bed. He leans down and whispers in my ear.

‘Wait here... keep your eyes on the bed. Picture yourself lying here bound and totally at my mercy.’ Oh my.

He moves away for a moment... and I can hear him near the door fetching something. All my senses are hyper-alert... my hearing acuter.

He is picked up something from the rack of whips and paddles by the door.

Holy cow. What is he going to do?

I feel him behind me. He takes my hair... pulls it into a ponytail behind me... and starts to braid it.

‘While I like your pigtails... Merry... I am too impatient to beat you right now. So, one will have to do.’ His voice is low... soft.

His deft fingers skim my back occasionally as they work down my hair... and each casual touch is like a sweet... electric shock against my skin. He fastens the end with a hair tie... then gently tugs the braid so that I am forced to step back flush against him. He pulls again to the side so that I angle my head... giving him easier access to my neck. Leaning down... he nuzzles my neck. Tracing his teeth and tongue from the base of my ear to my shoulder. He hums softly as he does... and the sound resonates through me. Right down... right down there... inside me. Unbidden... I groan quietly.

‘Hush now...’ he breathes against my skin. He holds up his hands in front of me... his arms touching mine. In his right hand is a flogger. I remember the name from my first introduction to this room.

‘Touch it...’ he whispers... and he sounds like the devil himself. My body flames in response. Tentatively... I reach out and brush the long strands.

It has many long fronds... all soft suede with small beads at the end.

‘I will use this. It will not hurt... but it will bring your blood to the surface of your skin and make you overly sensitive.’ Oh... he says it will not hurt.

‘What are the safe words... Merry?’ ‘Um... yellow and red... Sir...’ I whisper.

‘Good girl. Remember... most of your fear is in your mind.’ He drops the flogger on the bed... and his hands move to my waist.

‘You won’t be needing these...’ he murmurs and hooks his fingers into my panties and sweeps them down my legs. I step unsteadily out of them... supporting myself on the ornate post of the bed.

‘Stand still...’ he orders... and he kisses my behind and then gently nips me twice... making me tense.’ Now lie down. Face up...’ he adds as he smacks me hard on the behind... making me jump.

I crawl onto the bed’s hard... Hastily... unyielding mattress and lie down... looking up at him. The satin of the sheet beneath me is soft and cool against my skin. His gaze is impassive... except for his eyes which glow with a barely leashed excitement.

‘Hands above your head...’ he orders... and I do as I am bid.

Jeez... my body hungers for him. I want him already.

He turns... and out of the corner of my eye... I watch him saunter back over to the chest of drawers... returning with the iPod and what looks like an eye mask... like the one I used on my flight to Atlanta. The thought makes me want to smile... but I cannot quite make my lips cooperate. I am too consumed with anticipation. I just know my face is completely immobile... my eyes huge... as I gaze at him.

Sitting down on the edge of the bed... he shows me the iPod. It has a strange antenna device as well as headphones. How odd. I frown as I try to figure this out.

‘This transmits what’s playing on the iPod to the system in the room.’... RICHARD C. MAST answers my unspoken query as he taps the small antenna.’ I can hear what you are hearing... and I have a remote-control unit for it.’ He smirks his private... joke smile and holds up a small... flat device that looks like a very hip calculator. He leans across me... inserting the earbuds gently into my ears... and puts the iPod down somewhere on the bed above my head.

‘Lift your head...’ he commands... and I do so immediately.

Slowly... he slides the mask on... pulling the elastic over the back of my head... and I am blind. The elastic on the mask holds the earbuds in place. I can still hear him... though the sound is muffled as he rises from the bed. I am deafened by my breathing... it is shallow and erratic... reflecting my excitement. RICHARD C. MAST takes my left arm... stretches it gently to the left... hand corner... and attaches the leather cuff around my wrist. His long fingers stroke the length of my arm once he is

finished. Oh! His touch elicits a delicious... tickly shiver. I hear him move slowly round to the other side... takes my right arm and cuffs it. Again... his long fingers linger along my arm.

Oh, my yes... I am fit to burst already. Why is this so erotic?

He moves to the bottom of the bed and grabs both of my ankles.

'Lift your head again...' he orders.

I comply... and he drags me down the bed so that my arms are stretched out and almost straining at the cuffs. Holy cow... I cannot move my arms. A frisson of trepidation mixed with tantalizing exhilaration sweeps through my body... making me wetter. I groan. Parting my legs... he cuffs first my right ankle and then my left so I am staked out... spread... eagled... and vulnerable to him. It is so unnerving that I cannot see him. I listen hard... what is he doing? And I hear nothing... just my breathing and the pounding thud of my heart as blood pulses furiously against my eardrums.

Abruptly... the soft silent hiss and pop of the iPod springs into life. From inside my head... alone angelic voice sings unaccompanied a long sweet note... and it is joined almost immediately by another voice... and then more voices... Holy cow... a celestial choir... singing acapella in my head... an ancient... ancient hymnal. What in heaven's name is this? I have never heard anything like it. Something unbearably soft brushes against my neck... running languidly down my throat... slowly across my chest... over my breasts... caressing me... pulling at my nipples... it is so soft... skimming underneath. It is so unexpected. It is fur! It a large feather?

RICHARD C. MAST trails his hand... unhurried and deliberate... down to my belly... circling my bellybutton... then carefully from hip to hip... and I am trying to anticipate where he is going next... but the music... it is in my head... transporting me... the fur across the line of my pubic hair... between my legs... along with my thighs... down one leg... up the other... it tickles... but not quite... more voices join... the heavenly choir- all singing various parts... their voices blending blissfully and sweetly together in a melodic harmony that is beyond anything I have ever heard. I catch one word...' Deus'... and I realize they are singing in Latin. And still... the fur is moving down my arms and around my waist... back up across my breasts.

My nipples harden beneath the soft touch... and I am panting... wondering where his hand will go next. Suddenly... the fur is gone... and I can feel the fronds of the flogger flowing over my skin... following the same path as the fur... and it is so hard to concentrate on the music in my head... it sounds like a hundred voices singing... weaving an ethereal tapestry of fine... silken gold and silver through my head... mixed with the feel of the soft suede against my skin... trailing over me... oh my... abruptly... it disappears. Then suddenly... sharply... it bites down on my belly.

'A-aggh-h!' I cry out. It takes me by surprise... and it does not exactly hurt... but tingles all over... and he hits me again. Harder.

'A-ah!'

I want to move... to writhe... to escape... or to welcome... each blow... I do not know... it is so overwhelming... I cannot pull my arms... my legs are stuck... I am held very firmly in place... and again he strikes across my breasts... I cry out.

4

-And-

It is a sweet agony... bearable... just... pleasant... no... not immediately... but as my skin sings with each blow in perfect counterpoint to the music in my head... I am dragged into a dark... dark part of my psyche that surrenders to this most erotic sensation. Yes... I get this. He hits me across my hip. Then... he moves in swift blows over my pubic hair... on my thighs... and down my inner thighs... and back up my body... across my hips.

He keeps going as the music reaches a climax... and then suddenly... the music stops. And so-o does he. Then the singing starts again... building and building... and he rains down blows on me... and I groan and writhe. Once again... it ceases and all is quiet... except my wild breathing... and wild yearning. For... oh... what is happening? What is he going to do now? The excitement is almost unbearable. I have entered a very dark... carnal place.

The bed moves and shifts as he clambers over me... and the song starts again. He has it on repeat... this time it is his nose and lips that take the place of the fur... running down my neck and throat... kissing... sucking... trailing down to my breasts... Ah! Taunting each of my nipples in turn... his tongue swirling around one

while his fingers relentlessly tease the other... I groan... loudly I think... though I cannot hear. I am lost. Lost in him... lost in the astral... seraphic voices... lost to all the sensations I cannot escape... I am completely at the mercy of his expert touch.

He moves down to my belly... his tongue circling my navel... following the path of the flogger and the fur... I moan. He is kissing, sucking, and nibbling... moving south... and then his tongue is there. At... at the junction of my thighs. I throw my head back and cry out as I almost detonate into orgasm... I am on the brink... and he stops.



No! The bed shifts... and he kneels between my legs. He leans toward the bedpost... and the cuff on my ankle is suddenly gone. I pull my leg to the middle of the bed... resting it against him. He leans over to the opposite post and frees my other leg. His hands travel quickly down both my legs.

Squeezing and kneading... bringing life back into them. Then... grasping my hips... he lifts me so that my back is no longer on the bed. I am arched... resting on my shoulders. What? He is kneeling up between my legs... and in one swift... slamming move he is inside me... oh, freak... and I cry out again like a little girl that I am. I quiver hard of my impending orgasm begins... and he stills. The quiver never dies... oh-he is going to give it to me even further in deepness.

‘Please!’ I wail.

He grips me harder... in warning? I do not know... his fingers digging into the flesh of my behind as I lay panting... so I purposefully still. Very slowly... he starts to move again... out and then in... agonizingly slowly. Holy freak... Please! I am screaming inside...

-And-

As the number of voices in the choral piece increases... so does his pace... infinitesimally... he is so controlled... so in time with the music. And I can no longer bear it.

'Please...' I beg... and in one swift motion... he lowers me back onto the bed... and he is lying on top of me... his hands on the bed beside my breasts as he supports his weight... and he thrusts into me... as the music reaches its climax... I fall... free fall... into the most intense... agonizing orgasm I have ever had... and RICHARD C. MAST follows me... thrusting hard into me... three more times... finally stilling... then collapsing on top of me.

As my consciousness returns from wherever it has been... RICHARD C. MAST pulls out of me. The music has stopped... and I can feel him stretch across my body as he undoes the cuff on my right wrist. I groan as my hand is freed. He quickly frees my other hand... gently pulls the mask from my eyes... and removes the earbuds. I blink in the dim soft light and stare up into his intense gray gaze.

'Hi...' he murmurs.

‘Hi... yourself...’ I breathe shyly back at him. His lips quirk up into a smile... and he leans down and kisses me softly.

‘Well done... you...’ he whispers. ‘Turn over.’

Holy freak... what is he going to do now? His eyes soften.

‘I’m just going to rub your shoulders.’

‘Oh... okay.’

I roll stiffly onto my front. I am so tired. RICHARD C. MAST sits astride me and starts to massage my shoulders. I groan loudly... he has such strong... knowing fingers. Leaning down... he kisses my head.

‘What was that music?’ I mumble inarticulately.

He giggles- and thing 1960's-

‘It was... overwhelming.’

‘I’ve always wanted to freak to it.’

‘Not another first... Mr...?’

‘Indeed... Miss Merry.’

I groan again as his fingers work their magic on my shoulders.

‘Well... it’s the first time I’ve freaked to it... too...’ I murmur sleepily.

‘Hmm... you and I... we’re giving each other many firsts.’ His voice is a matter... of... fact.

‘What did I say to you in my sleep... Ch... err... Sir?’ His hands pause their ministrations for a moment.

‘You said lots of things... Merry- You talked about cages and strawberries... that you wanted more... and that you missed me.’ Oh... thank heavens for that.

‘Is that all?’ The relief in my voice is evident.

RICHARD C. MAST stops his heavenly massage and shifts so that he is lying beside me. His head up like his one elbow. He is frowning.’ What did you think you had said?’ Oh crap.

‘That I thought you were ugly... conceited... and that you were hopeless in bed.’ He creases his brow deepens.

‘Well... naturally I am all those things... and now you have me intrigued. What are you hiding from me... Miss Merry?’ I blink at him innocently.

‘I’m not hiding anything.’

‘Merry... you are a hopeless liar.’

‘I thought you were going to make me giggle after sex... this is not doing

it for me.’ His lips quirk up.’ I cannot tell jokes.’

‘Mr...! Something you cannot do?’ I grin at him... and he grins back.

‘No... hopeless joke teller.’ He looks so proud of himself that I start to giggle.

‘I’m a hopeless joke teller too...’

‘That is such a lovely sound...’ he murmurs... and he leans forward and kisses me.

‘And you are hiding something... Merry. I may have to torture it out of you.’



I wake with a jolt. I think I have just fallen down some stairs in a dream... and I bolt upright... momentarily disorientated. It is dark... and I am in RICHARD C. MAST’s bed alone. Something has woken me... some nagging thought. I glance over at the alarm clock on his bedside. It is 5:00 in the morning... but I feel rested.

Why is that? Oh... it is the time difference... it would be 8:00 a. m. in a Modern city. Holy crap... I need to take my pill. I clamber out of bed... grateful for whatever it is that has woken me. I can hear faint notes from the piano. RICHARD C. MAST is playing. This I must see. I love watching him play. Naked... I grab my bathrobe from the chair and wander quietly down the corridor... slipping on my robe and listening to the magical sound of the melodic lament that is coming from the great room.

Shrouded in darkness... RICHARD C. MAST sits in a bubble of light as he plays... and his hair glints with burnished copper highlights. He looks naked... though I know he is wearing his PJ bottoms. He is concentrating... playing beautifully... lost in the melancholy of the music. I hesitate... watching from the shadows... not wanting to interrupt him. I want to hold him. He looks lost... sad even... and aching lonely... or it is just the music that is so full of poignant sorrow. He finishes the piece... pauses for a split second... then starts to play it again. I move cautiously toward him... drawn like the moth to the flame... the idea makes me smile.

He glances up at me and frowns before his gaze returns to his hands Oh crap... is he pissed off that I am disturbing him?

‘You should be asleep...’ he scolds mildly.

I can tell he is pre... occupied with something.

‘So, should you...’ I retort not as mildly.

He glances up again... his lips twitching with a trace of a smile.

‘Are you scolding me... Miss Merry?’

‘Yes... Mr... I am.’

‘Well... I cannot sleep.’ He frowns once more like a trace of irritation or anger flashes across his face. With me? Surely not.

I ignore his facial expression and very bravely sit down beside him on the piano stool... placing my head on his bare shoulder to watch his deft... agile fingers caress the keys. He pauses fractionally... and then continues to the end of the piece.

‘What was that?’ I ask softly.

Something, I have been working on-

‘I’m always interested in what you do.’

He turns and softly presses his lips against my hair.

‘I didn’t mean to wake you.’

‘You did not. Play the other one.’

-Love story-

He starts to play slowly and deliberately. I feel the movement of his hands in his shoulder as I lean against him and close my eyes. The sad... soulful notes swirl slowly and mournfully around us... echoing off the walls. It is a hauntingly beautiful piece... sadder even than the Chopin... and I lose myself to the beauty of the lament. To a certain extent... it reflects how I feel. The deep poignant longing I must know this extraordinary man better... to try and understand his sadness. All too soon... the piece is at an end.

‘Why do you only play such romantic music?’

I sit upright and gaze up at him as he shrugs in answer to my question... his expression was wary.

‘So, you were just six when you started to play?’ I prompt.

He nods... his wary look intensifying. After a moment he volunteers.

‘I threw myself into learning the piano to please my new mother.’

‘To fit into the perfect family?’

‘Yes... so to speak...’ he says evasively. ‘Why are you awake? Don’t you need to recover from yesterday’s exertions?’

‘It is 8:00 in the morning for me. And I need to take my pill.’ He raises his eyebrows in surprise.

‘Well remembered...’ he murmurs... and I can tell he is impressed.

His lips quirk up in a half-smile.

‘Only you would start a course of time... specific birth control pills in a different time zone. You should wait for half an hour and then another half-hour tomorrow morning.

So, eventually, you can take them at a reasonable time.’

‘Good plan...’ I breathe. ‘So, what shall we do for half an hour?’ I blink innocently at him.

I can think of a few things...' he grins... gray eyes bright. I gaze back impassively as my insides clench and melt under his knowing look.

'On the other hand, we could talk...' I suggest quietly.

His brow creased.

'I prefer what I have in mind.' He scoops me onto his lap.

'You'd always rather have sex than talk...' I laugh... steadying myself by holding on to his upper arms.

'True. Especially with you.' He nuzzles my hair and starts a steady trail of kisses from below my ear to my throat. 'Maybe on my piano...' he whispers.

Oh my- my whole body tightens at the thought- Piano and his many talents- in all thing's art! Likewise- being the literary agent of the writer with 'The Longest Novel in the 21st century.'

Wow!!!

'I want to get something straight...' I whisper as my pulse starts to accelerate... and my inner goddess closes her eyes... reveling in the feel of his lips on me.

He pauses momentarily before continuing his sensual assault.

‘Always so eager for information... Miss Merry. What needs straightening out?’ he breathes against my skin at the base of my neck... continuing his soft gentle kisses.

‘Us...’ I whisper as I close my eyes.

‘Hmm. What about us?’ He pauses his trail of kisses along with my shoulder.

‘The contract.’

He lifts his head to gaze down at me... a hint of amusement in his eyes... and sighs. He strokes his fingertips down my cheek.

‘Well... The contract is moot... don’t you?’ His voice is low and raspy... his eyes soft.

‘Moot?’

‘Moot.’ He smiles. I gape at him quizzically.

‘But you were so keen.’

‘Well... that was before. Anyway... the Rules are not moot... they still stand.’ His expression hardens slightly.

‘Before? Before what?’

‘Before...’... He pauses... and the wary expression is back... ‘more.’ He shrugs.

‘Oh.’

‘Besides... we’ve been in the playroom twice now... and you haven’t run screaming for the hills.’

Do you expect me to?’

‘Nothing you do is expected... Merry...’ he says dryly.

‘So... let me be clear. You just want me to follow the Rules element of the contract all the time but not the rest of the contract?’

‘Except in the playroom. I want you to follow the spirit of the contract in the playroom... and yes... I want you to follow the rules... all the time. Then I know you will be safe... and I will be able to have you anytime I wish.’

‘And if I break one of the rules?’

‘Then I’ll punish you.’

‘But won’t you need my permission?’

‘Yes... I will.’

‘And- if I say no?’

He gazes at me for a moment... with a confused expression.

‘If you say no... you will say no. I will have to find a way to persuade you.’

I pull away from him and stand. I need some distance. He frowns as I stare down at him. He looks puzzled and wary again.

‘So, the punishment aspect remains.’

‘Yes... but only if you break the rules.’

‘I’ll need to re... read them...’ I say... trying to recall the details.

‘I’ll fetch them for you.’ His tone is suddenly businesslike.

Whoa. This has gotten serious so quickly. He rises from the piano and walks lithely to his study. My scalp prickles. Jeez... I need some tea. The future of our so... called relationship is being discussed at 4:44 in the morning when he is pre... occupied with something else... is this wise? I head into the kitchen which is still shrouded in darkness. Where are the light switches? I find them... flick them on... and pour water into the kettle. My pill! I rummage in my purse that I left on the breakfast bar and find them quickly. One swallow... and I am done. By the time I finish... RICHARD C. MAST is back... sitting on one of the bar stools... watching me intently.

‘Here you go.’ He pushes a typed piece of paper toward me... and I noticed that he had crossed some things out.



RULES

Obedience:

The Submissive will obey any instructions given by The Dominant immediately without hesitation or reservation and in an expeditious manner. The Submissive will agree to any sexual activity deemed fit and pleasurable by the Dominant excepting those activities which are outlined in hard limits (Appendix A). She will do so eagerly and without hesitation.

Sleep:

The Submissive will ensure she achieves a minimum of eight seven hours of sleep a night when she is not with the Dominant.

Food:

The Submissive will eat regularly to maintain her health and wellbeing from a prescribed list of foods (Appendix 4). The Submissive will not snack between meals... except for fruit.

Clothes:

While with The Dominant... The Submissive will wear clothing only approved by the Dominant. The Dominant will provide a clothing budget for The Submissive... which The Submissive shall utilize. The Dominant shall accompany the Submissive to purchase clothing on an ad hoc basis.

Exercise:

The Dominant shall provide the Submissive with a personal trainer four three times a week in an hour... long sessions at times to be mutually agreed between

the personal trainer and The Submissive. The personal trainer will report to The Dominant on The Submissive's progress.

Personal Hygiene/Beauty:

The Submissive will keep herself clean and shaved and/or always waxed. The Submissive will visit a beauty salon of The Dominant's choosing at times to be decided by The Dominant... and undergo whatever treatments the Dominant sees fit.

Personal Safety:

The Submissive will not drink to excess... smoke... take recreational drugs or put herself in any unnecessary danger.

Personal Qualities:

The Submissive will not enter any sexual relations with anyone other than the Dominant. The Submissive will always conduct herself respectfully and modestly. She must recognize that her behavior is a direct reflection of the Dominant. She shall be held accountable for any misdeeds... wrongdoings and misbehavior committed when not in the presence of the Dominant.

Failure to comply with any of the above will result in immediate punishment... the nature of which shall be determined by the Dominant.

'So, the obedience thing still stands?' 'Oh... yes.' He grins.

I shake my head amused... and before I realize it... I roll my eyes at him.'

Did you just roll your eyes at me... Merry?' He breathes.

Oh, freak.

'Possibly... depends on what your reaction is.'

'Same as always...' he says... shaking his head slightly... his eyes alight with excitement.

I swallow instinctively and a frisson of exhilaration runs through me.

'So...' Holy shit. What am I going to do?' Yes?' He licks his lower lip.

'You want to spank me now.'

'Yes. And I will.'

'Oh... really... Mr...?' I challenge... grinning back at him. Two can play this game.

'Are you going to stop me?'

'You're going to have to catch me first.'

His eyes widen a fraction... and he grins... slowly getting to his feet.

'Oh... really... Miss Merry?'

The breakfast bar is between us. I have never been so grateful for its existence as at this moment.

‘And you’re biting your lip...’ he breathes... moving slowly to his left as I move to mine.

‘You wouldn’t...’ I tease.’ You roll your eyes.’ I try reasoning with him. He continues to move toward his left... as do I.

‘Yes... but you’ve just raised the bar on the excitement stakes with this game.’ His eyes blaze... and wild anticipation emeritus from him.

‘I’m quite fast you know.’ I try for nonchalance.

‘So am I.’

He is stalking me... in his kitchen.

‘Are you going to come quietly?’ he asks.

‘Do I ever?’

‘Miss Merry... what do you mean?’ he smirks.’ It will be worse for you to have to get you.’

‘That is only if you catch me... RICHARD C. MAST. And right now, I have no intention of letting you catch me.’

‘Merry... you may fall and hurt yourself. Which will put you in direct contravention of rule number seven.’

‘I have been in danger since I met you... Mr... rules or no rules.’ ‘Yes, you have.’ He pauses... and his brow furrows slightly.

Suddenly... he lunges for me... making me squeal and run for the dining room table. I am Marry escape... putting the table between us. My heart is pounding and adrenaline has spiked through my body... boy... this is so thrilling. I am a child again... though that is not right. I watch him carefully as he paces deliberately toward me. I inch away.

‘You certainly know how to distract a man... Merry.’ ‘We aim to please... Mr... Distract you from what?’ ‘Life. The universe.’ He waves one of his hands vaguely.’ You did seem very pre... preoccupied as you were playing.’ He stops and folds his arms... his expression amused.

‘We can do this all day... baby... but I will get you... and it will just be worse for you when I do.’

‘No... you won’t.’ I must not be over... confident. I repeat this as a mantra. My subconscious has found her Nikes... and she is on the starting blocks.

‘Anyone would think you didn’t want me to catch you.’

‘I do not. That is the point. I feel about the punishment the way you feel about me touching you.’

His entire demeanor changes in a nanosecond. Gone is playful RICHARD C. MAST... and he stands to stare at me as if I had slapped him. He is ashen.

‘That’s how you feel?’ he whispers.

Those four words... and the way he utters them... speaks volumes.

Oh no. They tell me so much more about him and how he feels. They tell me about his fear and loathing. I frown.

No... I do not feel that bad. No way. Do I?

‘No. It doesn’t affect me quite as much like that... but it gives you an idea...’
I murmur... staring anxiously at him.

‘Oh...’ he says.

Crap, he looks completely and utterly lost... like I have pulled the rug from under his feet.

Taking a deep breath... I move around the table until I am standing in front of him... gazing into his apprehensive eyes.

‘You hate it that much?’ he breathes... his eyes filled with horror.

‘Well... no...’ I reassure him. Jeez... that is how he feels about people touching him?

‘No. I feel ambivalent about it. I do not like it... but I do not hate it.’ ‘But last night... in the playroom... you...’ he trails off.

‘I do it for you... RICHARD C. MAST... because you need it. I do not. You did not hurt me last night. That was in a different context... and I can rationalize that internally... and I trust you. But when you want to punish me... I worry that you will hurt me.’

His gray eyes blaze like a turbulent storm. Time moves... and expands and slips away before he answers softly.

‘I want to hurt you. But not beyond anything that you could not take.’

Freak!

‘Why?’

He runs his hand through his hair... and he shrugs.

‘I just need it.’ He pauses... gazing at me with anguish... and he closes his eyes and shakes his head. ‘I cannot tell you...’ he whispers.

‘Can’t or won’t?’

‘Won’t.’

‘So, you know why.’

‘Yes.’

‘But you won’t tell me.’

‘If I do... you will run screaming from this room... and you’ll never- ever want to return.’ He stares at me warily. ‘I cannot risk that... Merry.’

‘You want me to stay.’

‘More than you know. I could not bear to lose you.’ Oh my.

He gazes down at me... and suddenly... he pulls me into his arms, and he is kissing me... kissing me passionately. It takes me completely by surprise... and I sensed his panic and desperate need in his kiss.

‘Do not leave me. You said you would not leave me... and you begged me not to leave you... in your sleep...’ he murmurs against my lips.

Oh... my nocturnal confessions.

‘I don’t want to go.’ And my heart clenches... turning itself inside out.

This is a man in need. His fear is naked and obvious... but he is lost...

somewhere in his darkness. His eyes wide and bleak and tortured. I can soothe him. Join him briefly in the darkness and bring him into the light.

‘Show me...’ I whisper.

‘Show you?’

‘Show me how much it can hurt.’

‘What?’

‘Punish me. I want to know how bad it can get.’ RICHARD C. MAST steps back away from me... completely confused. You would try?’

‘Yes. I said I would.’ But I have an ulterior motive. If I do this for him... he will let me touch him. He blinks at me.

‘Merry... you’re so confusing.’

‘I am confused too. I am trying to work this out. And you and I will know... finally... if I can do this. If I can handle this... then maybe you...’

My words fail me... and his eyes widen again. He knows I am referring to the touch thing. For a moment... he looks torn... but then a steely resolve settles on his features... and he narrows his eyes... gazing at me speculatively as if weighing up alternatives.

Abruptly... he clasps my arm in a firm grip and turns... leading me out-of-the great room... up the stairs... and to the playroom. Pleasure and pain... reward and punishment... his words from so long-ago echo through my mind like his thoughts about me always having his way. Are you ready for this?’

‘I’ll show you how bad it can be... and you can make your mind up.’ He pauses by the door.’ I nod... my mind made up... and I am vaguely lightheaded... faint as all the blood leaves my face. Grabs what looks like a belt from the rack beside the door... He opens the door... and still grasping my arm... then leads me over to the red leather bench in the far corner of the room.

‘Bend over the bench...’ he murmurs.

Okay. I can do this. I bend over the smooth soft leather. He left my bathrobe on. In a quiet part of my brain... I am vaguely surprised that he has not made me take it

off. Holy freak this is going to hurt... I know. My subconscious has passed out... and my inner goddess is endeavoring to look brave.

‘We are here because you said yes... Merry. And you ran from me. I am going to hit you six times... and you will count on me.’

Why doesn't he just get on with it? He always makes such a meal of punishing me. I roll my eyes... knowing full well he cannot see me.

He lifts the hem of my bathrobe... and for some reason... this feels more intimate than being naked. He gently caresses my behind... running his warm hand all over both cheeks and down to the tops of my thighs.

‘I am doing this so that you remember not to run from me... and as exciting as it is... I never want you to run from me...’ he whispers.

-And-

Like the irony is not lost on me. I was running to avoid this. If he had opened his arms... I had run to him... not away from him.

And you rolled your eyes at me. You know how I feel about that.’ Suddenly... it had gone... that nervous edgy fear in his voice. He is back from wherever he has been. I hear it in his tone... in the way, he places his fingers on my back... holding me... and the atmosphere in the room changes.

I close my eyes... bracing myself for the blow. It comes hard... snapping across my backside... and the bite of the belt is everything I feared. I cry out involuntarily... and take a huge gulp of air.

‘Count... Merry!’ he commands.

‘One!’ I shout at him... and it sounds like an expletive.

He hits me again... and the pain pulses and echoes along the line of the belt. Holy shit... that smarts.

‘Two!’ I scream. It feels so good to scream.

His breathing is ragged and harsh. Whereas mine is almost none... existent as I desperately scramble around my psyche looking for some internal strength. The belt cuts into my flesh again.

‘Three!’ Tears spring unwelcome into my eyes. Jeez... this is harder than I thought... so much harder than the spanking. He is not holding anything back.

‘Four!’ I yell as the belt bites me again... and now tears are streaming down my face.

I do not want to cry. It angers me that I am crying. He hits me again.

‘Five.’ My voice is more a choked... strangled sob... and at this moment... I hate him. One more... I can do one more. My backside feels as if it is on fire.

‘Six...’ I whisper as the blistering pain cuts across me again... and I hear him drop the belt behind me... and he is pulling me into his arms... all breathless and compassionate... and I want none of him.

‘Let go... no...’ And I find myself struggling out his grasp... pushing- him away. Fighting him.

‘Don’t touch me!’ I hiss. I straighten and stare at him... and he is- watching me as if I might bolt... gray eyes wide... bemused. I dash the tears angrily out of my eyes with the backs of my hands... glaring at him.

‘This is what you like? Me... like this?’ I use the sleeve of the bathrobe to wipe my nose.

He gazes at me warily.

‘Well... you are one freaked... up the son of a bitch.’ ‘Merry...’ he pleads... shocked.

Do not you dare... Marry me! You need to sort your shit out...!’

-And-

With that... I turn stiffly... and I walk out of the playroom... closing the door quietly behind me.

I clasp the door handle behind me and briefly lean back against the- door. Where to go? Do I run? Do I stay? I am so mad... angry scalding tears- spill down my

cheeks... and I brush them furiously aside. I just want to curl up. Curl up and recuperate in some way. Heal my shattered faith. How could I have been so stupid? Of course, it hurts.

Tentatively... I rub my backside. Aah! It is sore. Where to go? Not his room. My room... or the room that will be mine... no... is mine... was mine. Therefore, he wanted me to keep it. He knew I would need distance from him.

I launch myself stiffly in that direction... conscious that RICHARD C. MAST may- follow me. It is still dark in the bedroom... dawn only a whisper in the skyline. I climb awkwardly into bed... careful not to sit on my aching and tender backside. I keep the bathrobe on... wrapping it around me... and curl up and let go... sobbing hard into my pillow.

What was I thinking? Why did I let him do that to me? I wanted the dark... to explore how bad it could be... but it is too dark for me. I cannot do this. Yet... this is what he does... this is how he gets his kicks.

What a monumental wake... up call. And to be fair to him... he warned me and warned me... repeatedly. He is not normal. He has needs that I cannot fulfill. I realize that now. I do not want him to hit me like that again... ever. I think of the couple of times he has hit me... and how easy he was on me by comparison. Is that enough for him? I sob harder into the pillow. I am going to lose him. He will not want to be with me if I cannot give him this. Why... why... why have I fallen in love with-

The- Dark Shadows? Why? Why can't I love José... or Paul Clayton... or someone like me?

Oh... his distraught look as I left. I was so cruel... so shocked by the-savagery... will he forgive me... will I forgive him? My thoughts are all- haywire and jumbled... echoing and bouncing off the inside of my skull. My subconscious is shaking her head sadly... and my inner goddess is nowhere to be seen. Oh... this is a dark morning of the soul for me. I am so alone. I want my Mom. I remember her parting words at the airport...

Follow your heart... darling... and please... please... try not to over... think things. Relax and enjoy. You are so young... sweetheart... you have so much to experience... just let it happen. You deserve the best of everything.

I did follow my heart... and I have a sore ass and an anguished... broken spirit to show for it. I must go. That is, it... I must leave. He is no good to me... and I am no good for him. How can we do this work? And the thought of not seeing him again practically chokes me... my lust for this man.

I hear the door click open. Oh no... He is here. He puts something- down on the bedside table... and the bed shifts under his weight as he climbs- in behind me.

'Hush...' he breathes... and I want to pull away from him... move to the-other side of the bed... but I am paralyzed. I cannot move and lie stiffly... not yielding at all. 'Don't fight me... Merry... please...' he whispers. Gently... he pulls me into his arms... burying his nose in my hair... kissing my neck.

‘Don’t hate me...’ he breathes softly against my skin... his voice- achingly sad. My heart clenches anew and releases a fresh wave of silent sobbing. He continues to kiss me softly... tenderly... but I remain aloof and wary.

We lie together like this... neither saying anything for ages. He just- holds me... and very gradually... I relax and stop crying. Dawn comes and goes... and the soft light gets brighter as the morning moves on... and still we lie quietly.

‘I bought you some Advil and some arnica cream...’ he says after a- long while.

I turn very slowly in his arms so I can face him. I am resting my head on his arm. His eyes are flinty gray and guarded.

I gaze at his beautiful face. He is giving nothing away... but he keeps his eyes on mine... hardly blinking. Oh... he is so breathtakingly good... looking. In such a brief time... he has become so... so dear to me. Reaching up... I caress his cheek and run the tips of my fingers through his stubble. He closes his eyes and exhales slightly.

‘I’m sorry...’ I whisper.

He opens his eyes and looks at me puzzled.

‘What for?’

‘What I said.’

‘You didn’t tell me anything I didn’t know.’ And his eyes soften with relief.’

I am sorry I hurt you.' I shrug.

'I asked for it.' And now I know. I swallow. Here goes. I need to say my piece.' I do not think I can be everything you want me to be...' I whisper. His eyes widen slightly... and he blinks... his fearful expression returning. 'You are everything I want you to be.' What?

'I do not understand. I am not obedient... and you can be as I am not going to let you do that to me again. And that is what you need... you said so.'

He closes his eyes again... and I can see a myriad of emotions cross his face. When he reopens them... his expression is bleak? Oh no.

'You are right. I should let you go. I am no good for you.'

My scalp prickles as every single hair follicle on my body stand to attention... and the world falls away from me... leaving a wide... yawning abyss for me to fall into. Oh no.

'I don't want to go...' I whisper. Freak... this is it. Pay or play. Tears swim in my eyes once more.

'I don't want you to go either...' he whispers... his voice raw. He reaches up and gently strokes my cheek and wipes away a falling tear with his thumb.' I have come alive since I met you.' His thumb traces the contours of my lower lip.

‘Me too...’ I whisper...’ I have fallen in love with you... RICHARD C. MAST.’ His eyes widen again... but this time... with pure... undiluted fear. ‘No...’ he breathes as if I have knocked the wind out of him.

Oh no.

‘You cannot love me... Merry. No... that is wrong.’ He is horrified.

‘Wrong? Why is it wrong?’

‘Well... look at you. I cannot make you happy.’ His voice is anguished.

‘But you do make me happy.’ I frown.

‘Not now... not doing what I want to do.’

Holy freak. This is it. This is what it boils down to...

incompatibility... and all those poor subs come to mind.

‘We’ll never get past that... will we?’ I whisper... my scalp prickling in fear.

He shakes his head bleakly. I close my eyes. I cannot bear to look at him.

‘Well... I had better go... then...’ I murmur... wincing as I sit up.

‘No... don’t go.’ He sounds panicked.

‘There’s no point in me staying.’ Suddenly... I feel tired... really dog... tired... and I want to go now. I climb out of bed... and RICHARD C. MAST follows.

'I am going to get dressed. I would like some privacy...' I say... my voice flat and empty as I leave him standing in the bedroom.

Heading downstairs... I glance at the living room... thinking how only hours before, I had rested my head on his shoulder as he played the piano.

So much has happened since then. I have had my eyes opened and glimpsed the extent of his depravity... and I now know he is not capable of love... of giving or receiving love. My worst fears have been realized. And strangely... it is very liberating.

The pain is such that I refuse to acknowledge it. I feel numb. I have somehow escaped from my body and am now a casual observer of this unfolding tragedy. I shower quickly and methodically... thinking only of each second in front of me. Now squeeze the body wash bottle. Put the body wash bottle back in the rack. Rub the cloth on the face... on shoulders... on and on... all simple... mechanical actions... requiring simple mechanical thoughts.

I finish my shower... and as I have not washed my hair... I can dry myself quickly. I dress in the bathroom... taking my jeans and t... shirt out of my small suitcase. My jeans chafe against my backside... but quite frankly... it is a pain I welcome as it distracts my mind from what is happening to my splintering... shattered heart.

I stoop to shut my suitcase... and the bag holding RICHARD C. MAST's gift catches my eye... a modeling kit for a Blahnik L23 glider... something for him to build. Tears threaten. Oh no... happier times... when there was the hope of more. I

take it out of the case... knowing that I need to give it to him. Quickly... I rip a small piece of paper from my notebook... hastily scribble a note for him... and leave it on top of the box.

I gaze at myself in the mirror. A pale and haunted ghost stares' back at me. I scoop my hair into a ponytail and ignore how swollen my eyelids are from the crying. My subconscious nods with approval. Even she knows not to be snarky right now. I cannot believe that my world is crumbling around me into a sterile pile of ashes... all my hopes and dreams cruelly dashed. No... No, do not think about it. Not now... not yet. Taking a deep breath... I pick up my case... and after placing the glider kit and my note on his pillow... I head for the great room.

RICHARD C. MAST is on the phone. He is dressed in black jeans and t... shirt. His feet are bare.

'He said what!' he shouts... making me jump.' Well... he could have told us the freaking truth. What is his number...? I need to call him... Welch... this is a real freak... up.' He glances up and does not take his dark and brooding eyes off me. 'Find her...' he snaps and presses the off switch.

I walk over to the couch and collect my backpack... doing my best to ignore him. I take the Mac out of it and walk back toward the kitchen...

placing it carefully on the breakfast bar... along with the Phone and the car key.

When I turn to face him... he is staring at me... stupefied with horror.

‘I need the money that Peter got for my Beetle.’ My voice is clear and-calm... devoid of emotion... extraordinary.

‘Merry... I do not want those things... they are yours...’ he says in disbelief.
Please... take them.’

‘No RICHARD C. MAST... I only accepted them under sufferance... and I do not want them anymore.’

‘Merry... be reasonable...’ he scolds me... even now.

‘I do not want anything that will remind me of you. I just need the money that Peter got in my car.’ My voice is quite monotonous.

He gasps.

‘Are you trying to wound me?’

‘No.’ I frown staring at him. Of course, not... I love you.’ I am not. I am trying to protect myself...’ I whisper. Because you do not want me the way I want you.

‘Please... Merry... take that stuff.’

‘RICHARD C. MAST... I do not want to fight... I just need the money.’

He narrows his eyes... but I am no longer intimidated by him. Well...

only a little. I gaze impassively back... not blinking or backing down.

‘Will you take a check?’ he says acidly.

‘Yes. You are good for it.’

He does not smile... he just turns on his heel and stalks into his study. I take a last lingering look around his apartment... at the art on the walls... all abstracts... serene... cool... cold... even. Fitting... I think absently. My eyes stray to the piano. Jeez... if I had kept my mouth shut... we would have made love on the piano. No... freaked... we would have freaked on the piano. Well... I would have made love. The thought lies heavy and sad in my mind. He has never made love to me... has he? It has always been freaking to him.

RICHARD C. MAST returns and hands me an envelope.

‘Peter got a decent price. It is a classic car. You can ask him. He will take you home.’ He nods in the direction over my shoulder. I turn... and Peter is standing in the doorway... wearing his suit... as impeccable as ever.

‘That is fine... I can get myself home... thank you.’

I turn to stare at RICHARD C. MAST... and I see the barely... contained fury in his eyes.

‘Are you going to defy me at every turn?’

‘Why to change a habit of a lifetime?’ I give him a small... apologetic shrug.

He closes his eyes in frustration and runs his hand through his hair.

‘Please... Merry... let Peter take you home.’

‘I’ll get the car... Miss Merry...’ Peter announces authoritatively. RICHARD C. MAST nods at him... and when I glance around... Peter has gone.

I turn back to face the RICHARD C. MAST. We are four feet apart. He steps forward...

-And-

Instinctively without conscious thought, I step back. He stops... and the anguish in his expression is palpable... his gray eyes burning.

‘I don’t want you to go...’ he murmurs... his voice full of longing.

‘I cannot stay. I know what I want and you cannot give it to me... and I cannot give you what you need.’

He takes another step forward... and I hold up my hands.

‘Don’t... please.’ I recoil from him. There is no way I can tolerate his touch now... it will slay me. ‘I can’t do this.’

Grabbing my suitcase and my backpack... I head for the foyer. He follows me... keeping a careful distance. He presses the elevator button... and the doors open. I climbed in.

‘Goodbye... RICHARD C. MAST...’ I murmur.

'Merry... goodbye...' he says softly... and he looks utterly... utterly broken... a man in agonizing pain... reflecting how I feel inside. I tear my gaze away from him before- I change my mind and try to comfort him.

The elevator doors close... and it whisks me down to the bowels of the basement and my hell.

Peter holds the door open for me... and I climb into the back of the car. I avoid eye contact.

Embarrassment and shame wash over me. I am a complete failure.

I had hoped to drag my Dark Shadows into the light... but it has proved a task beyond my meager abilities. Desperately... I try to keep my emotions banked and at bay. As we head out onto 4th Avenue... I stare blankly out of the window... and the enormity of what I have done slowly washes over me. Shit... I have left him.

The only man I have ever loved. The only man I have ever slept with. I gasp... and the levees burst. Tears course unbidden and unwelcome down my cheeks... and I wipe them away hurriedly with my fingers... scrambling in my bag for my sunglasses. As we pause at some traffic lights... Peter holds out a linen handkerchief for me. He says nothing and does not look in my direction... and I take it with gratitude.

'Thank you...' I mutter... and this small discreet act of kindness is my undoing. I sit back in the luxurious leather seats and weep.

The apartment is achingly empty and unfamiliar. I have not lived here long enough for it to feel like home. I head straight to my room... and there... hanging limply at the end of my bed... is an incredibly sad... deflated helicopter balloon. Charlie Tango... looking and feeling exactly like me. I grab it angrily off my bedrail... snapping the tie... and hug it to me. Oh... what have I done?

Interval: 6 Wildest Midnights

In a world that all books are not allowed to be read, so they are brunt...

‘It was a yearning to burn.’ Computers and robots have taken over the world, nobody needs to read any of that shit, or think. Everything is at our fingertips with cell phones, iPads, and PC's, without looking through old dusty pages, plus Its agents the law to think for yourself, and read any books. We burn books like most have the burning itch to have unpredicted sex.

We burn books like most have the burning itch to have unpredicted sex now morning, like the alarm, going off to let me know so... its 7 am... on a Monday- and the year is 2070. I have great frustration with myself as I frown at my look in the mirror, not what you call ass ugly- but on days like this one you just wish you were dead... all girls know that feeling.

The feeling of worthlessness was over warming me. ‘Look at this hair what a mess- I said- in my mind, rolling my eyes and making faces as I go to pick my nose.’ It is just not doing what I want... I said whispering. Hell... look at it- my hair my face- and eyes, like- just freaking sucks today, I finally said it out loud- yet the cat

looked like I was crazy too- for talking. Damn Harper for being sick and lay open to me to this nightmare... of like having to do this... for her.

I do not want to but- it is for her. I feel I have too- n- all.

1

I should be studying for my final exams, and I am in high school girl- looking forward to graduation- intern work looks good for a job, coming up like I won't be 17 years of age until July of this year- but it looks good to have- the ass-kissing- no? All the test- all the test- God just wants to be done with it all- like which are all this week.

Yet here I am trying to brush my hair into submission and look cute... hard for a girl like me said by the others- not by me. I must not sleep with it wet anymore- God last night just jumped in the bed nude... and masturbate 10 times, I use a vibrator, and dildo- but most of the times I use my hands, I started when I was 6- manly to get to sleep by passing out afterward- to get up... and look at all of this that you see here. at the time- 16 as of this, today boys ask all the time- Bra size: 34b yah I no. Underwear type: thongs, boy shorts, when you developed pubic hair 11 Do you Shave/Wax? When did you start? 12 Do you masturbate?

Yes, with a dildo going in out coming hard over and over for some boy that you wish was real. When did you start? That why I said it- Have you had sex? Not yet- How old were you the first time? Um? That would be nice- so I would not feel like a complete loser. Have you given oral sex to a guy? How old were you the first time?

Yes, at 9-year-old... Have you been fingered? Ah yes, like when I was 10. How old were you the first time? I said it... it is true. Do you change in front of girlfriends? Family? Yes, friends and mom, and my girls. Skinny-dip? Yes, with friends... the top questions boys ask me... about who they think I am.

And all they care about.

Anyways- I must not sleep with it wet. Reciting this mantra several times, I endeavor, once more about it all, to bring it under control with the brush as I finger myself- just to get the edge off- getting one rubbed out before the day starts. I roll my eyes in exasperation and gaze at the pale, brown-haired girl with blue eyes too big for her face staring back at me and giving up.

My only option is to restrain my wayward hair in a ponytail, and hope that I look semi-presentable. Shannia is my roommate, us- we- are just two girls trying to make it without Mom and Dad holding our hands- you know how it is- I want to be a big girl- playing house they call it. I would say that she should be the one doing this for me. But I must... Consequently, she cannot attend the interview she had arranged to do with me; so-o I would not blow chunks on the poor ass hole like he is some dick-some mega-industrialist tycoon that I have never heard of... you the type of old crabby dick sucker. That gets joy out of betting off under the desk to girls like me, hand coffee.

Like, I just want to work for the student newspaper, do I have to do this- for college... and get nothing out of it...? So, I have volunteered to do this agent my well

and better judgment. I know what is going to be... me getting hurt and having to come home crying, and need to come hard, in my undies- off to the side. I have final exam calls for me to do this, one essay to finish they call- yah sure you suck the man off- for it, and I am supposed to be working this afternoon and be happy- sure. Smile and walk away- is what I do- in school, not know shit for this job- no education at all- here. Thanks... I think on the inside... but no - today- like I must drive one hundred and seventy-five miles, me paying for it all- no question is asked- to sit down and get ass freaked- in a scene- all the way down to downtown New York to meet the mysterious RICHARD C. MAST of Ellie Magazine head shit of bad writing- Inc.

As a brilliant businessperson and major sponsor of our school his time is extraordinarily precious (my school would say not me) - much more- precious than she tells me... my teachers that is I need it with SATs- yah- right... Damn her extra-curricular activities. If I wanted that I would have suck and blowing a trumpet in the band for 6 years. It is fingering he- he.

Shannia is huddled on the couch, rubbing, and humping a pillow- in the living room spread open she turns- as I should be with her... she is diddling herself as a 17-year-old will do... that just for fun- yelling making the old ass next door pissed. They creep- look at us- shaking their head to what they do not understand, just calling us the slut generation- as they sand on their verandas. Like you can do it on the veranda- of your apartment? He- he- I get it- she is open... to it... it was said. 'Mary, I am sorry about cutting out on you. It took me nine months to get this interview... from my dick suckers at school- It will take another six to reschedule, and a repeat of my

last year but I not going. I will just drop out... it is what they want... anyway- you are dumb- I said. Come with me so-o we will both have graduated. As an editor with honors, I cannot blow this off- you should not either- come on like what you have done. I would rather just masturbate all the time... okay...? I said... (You can make more doing that... she said under her breath.)

Please,' Shannia begs me in her harsh, sore throat voice for sucking one off the night before. How does she do it? Even sick she looks freaking- beautiful, strawberry blonde hair all in place and blue bright eyes, although mine looks wet and water like the way she should look doing what she has just done. 'Nice butt pug... ha-thanks she said.' I ignore my twinge of annoying sympathy for my low self-esteem. 'Of course, I will go Shannia if you and- me ____ here- and she points downward. You should go back to bed with me.

Would you like some Nyquil or Tylenol mixed with alcohol?' That such do it...? 'All of the above, please... Here are the questions for you, did I need to do this just to be a writer- of shit. So, her my recorder does not pay it back you may get Pron sounds of last night. Just press the record here- see the button that says recorded. Make notes, I will transcribe it all for you, I know you cannot do that- without bitching about it.' 'I know nothing about him,' I murmur over and over, trying to find something I may like about him, and failing to quash my rising dread and fear. 'See these here the list in her hand- a crumpled piece of paper- all the questions just ask these and you will do fine- got them from google- like what I did through high school google well teach you- not your teachers, see- see you through that in a line- and you look smart to

this dick- that is what it is all about kissing ass. Go, love- It is a long drive where you do not want to look bad in front of the big-time faggot.

I do not want you to be late- your right- so he is gay.' That what they say- freak him and see and let me no- nice... slut I said to her- you know it- she said back. 'Okay, I am going- do not hurt yourself there. Get back to bed- and put that thing away or shave it. Going to eat out later- WHAT? Food- food latter.' I stare at her fondly. Only for you, Shannia, would I do this? 'I will do it all- like all ways- good luck- G- thanks- you care? I spoke. And thanks to Mary - as usual, you are my lifesaver.' Getting- together with my schoolbag, I smile ironically at her, then head out the door down all the steps to the car. I cannot believe it, I have let Shannia talk me into this.

Nevertheless, then Shannia could talk anyone into anything, she was the hot one in school, not me. She will make an exceptional journalist- I am sure of it so would have I if I would have been given the chance. She is communicative, robust, convincing, quarrelsome, lovely - and she is my sweetheart, sweetie of a friend. The roads are clearly wet, rain covered yet, I set off from home, it is early, and I do not have to be in New York until three this afternoon to be on time. I am not sure if my old car, well make the journey in time- she is an incredibly old gill.

Oh, a fun drive, and the miles slip away as I floor the pedal- backfiring all the way. My journey's end is the headquarters of Mr. Durval's global enterprise that he so-called made all on his own doing. It is a huge 100 story office building, all curved

glass, and steel, an architect's modern imaginary, with Durval wrote inconspicuously in brace over the crystal-like glass of front revolving doors, and all on the building high up.

It is a quarter to three when I come to my destination, relieved that I am not late as I walk into the mammoth - and frankly unapproachable - glass, steel, and white stonework antechamber. In arrears the solid sandstone is the desk of dark wood, an extremely attractive, dressed up, young girls' smile is all too creepy for my liking-enjoyably at me- like they want to know all about me- be their eye. She is wearing the sharpest charcoal suit jacket and white shirt I have ever seen. She looks immaculate. 'I am here to see Mr. Durval.

I am - so and so- I said- yes okay- it does not matter take a number; I call you when I fill it your time to see this man. So, I must kiss your ass too do this lady she said all pissy- yes or you can walk out the door. FREAK YOU! I said to here no told me up- bossy for me- but 3 hours is too long to be puss- freaked around with. She arches her eyebrow slightly as I stand self-consciously before her. I am beginning to wish I had borrowed one of Shannia's formal blazers rather than wear my shorts and a tank top. I have tried and worn my only skirt, my no-nonsense brown knee-length boots, and a blue sweater. For me, this is smart. I tuck one of the escaped tendrils of my hair behind my ear as I pretend, she does not intimidate me. 'Miss, we have expected you but not looking like you roll out of bed. Please sign in here, Miss Merry, you will want the last train over there to go up-on the left, press for the twentieth hounded floor.' She smiles kindly at me, amused no doubt about it, as I sign in- and

sigh- and stop and get a dress- for this man that too old to get it up to care about me showing it all off.

‘Stuff your eyes with wonder, I always say, live as if you would drop dead in ten seconds- like most that do these days, and your body is bunt on the spot in plain sight for the world to see- just like a book- no one cares about what inside of you- is all cold what on the cover- not the text just the picture. See the world... good now look at it- I do not see anything to live for- It is more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in place of work my way.’

She indicators to me and as I go past security as a GUEST- very confidently and yet shy- stamping on the forward-facing. I cannot help my smirk. Surely, it is obvious that I am just visiting. I do not fit in here at all. The train beaters with a gust of air moving past me fast- mag-lev- me with incurable swiftness to the floor in under zip time. The doors slide open to let more androids work in and out, I call them a waste of what we- you and I could be doing, and I am in another outsized antechamber - again all glass, steel, and white sandstone. I look up at the top- seeing the sky go from blue to black... Yet to me and most this is nothing these days.

Nothing changes in my life, just a new day of shit, I inwardly sigh. Thanking the train for the ride, I walk over to the bank of silos past the two security men who are both far more vigorously dressed than me, in their blue armed suits. I am threatened by another desk of sandstone and another young blond-haired person- no name just a number- looks at me dressed faultlessly in black and white who does not

even rise to greet me, or care I am there. Other to pop gum- and look at the ID- slightly- that the robot's job she said- I do not get paid to do that or think- so why do it? 'All and sundry I left something behind when he passed think in my thoughts, my grandfather said- too always' work hard.

2

A child, a book, a painting, a house, or a wall built, or a pair of shoes made- you are smart- go for your dreams even if the world is not a wonderful place. Or a garden planted- now looks at the world- plant things ha. Something your hand touches in some way- has meaning always, like part of your soul has somewhere to go when you die, remember that- yes right- I roll my eyes- at that too.

'Why...? Why is it?' we go...? That was all I remember before they put him down- and let him up. I was kicking and scrambling- and they ripped me away at 10 years old- it how it must be- MOM said. 'Too much of a cost on us taxpayers. Death and end of funds... is life. 'Miss, could you wait here the bot said, please?' She points to a seated area of white skin covered chairs. Behind the leather chairs are a spacious glass-walled meeting room with an equally spacious dark wood table and at least twenty matching chairs around it. Beyond that, there is a floor-to-ceiling window with a view of the New York skyline, that appears out through the city on the way to the Sound. It is a spectacular panorama, and I am temporarily paralyzed by the view and the look down all glass flooring too. Wow- I said amazed...

I sit down, fish the questions from my satchel, and go through them, inwardly cursing Shannia for not providing me with a brief biography. I know nothing about this man I am about to interview. He could be ninety or he could be thirty. The uncertainty is galling, and my nerves resurface, making me fidget. I have never been comfortable with one-on-one interviews, preferring the anonymity of a group discussion where I can sit inconspicuously at the back of the room. To be honest, I prefer my own company, reading a classic British novel, curled up in a chair in the campus library. Not sitting shuddering apprehensively in an immense glass and stone structure. I just rolled my eyes at myself in the many shiny objects around me just like this showing too much ass.

Like- get a hold of it- it is just a man winkie look at me in the face- why is this okay? I said to myself. Judging building for adding nudes in artwork, which is too scientific and cold-modern, I guess Old is in his thing: fit, tanned, and fair-haired to match the rest of the personnel. My only warmth is the glow of fire lights- just for show-An an additional elegant thing-ie-me-bob-er, a more nude girl is compromised sexual poses' flawless girls showing it all, shit look at this compared to that- not good-not good... I see younger no-names blond-haired person comes out of a large- acting mindless door that lights open with their barcode on their rest.

With a deep breath, I stood up. 'Miss' it is time. It is like a death march I thought... with the creepy music in the background- playing in my implanted headset... adjusting automatically. Every person in the whole dying world must leave something behind when he/she/it dies- it- being the no names- that are just- works that have not

met the grade of IQ of 50 or less, my grandfather they are not dumb some are at 10-smoking and drugging- nothing more- just no work in them. So, this is what they do-make them drummer... hand out money for nothing- they can even come up to a child of 3 making a book or a painting or tie a pair of shoes or make them.

Otherwise, a garden planted... something your hand touched some way, so your soul has somewhere to go when you die, and when people look at that tree or that flower you planted, you are there. 'Indeed,' I clear my throat- of what was hard to swallow. 'Certainly.' There, that sounded more confident- when I have voices in my hand say you will never do SHIT. 'The RICHARD C. MAST will see you in a moment. May I take your jacket- miss the deadbeat said?' 'Oh, sure thing...' I struggle out of the jacket and was nice to the dumb- bum. Can I get you anything to eat or drink, would you like: 'Would you like tea, coffee, water- saltines?' something at all? 'Um - no- thank you- I said back to this- it- female.' This blond-haired person-glances her eyes- at the task, she now must do- for hardly any money- she is incredibly young and uneducated- for a woman of her age sitting at the desk she is at doing this work; and as she asks, turning her attention back to me as she stumbles to do the simple job. Here it is- 'A glass of water. Thank you,' I murmur not looking up at her- for she, a no-friend. Olivia scurries up proximately and scurries to an entrance/exit on the other side of the room.

'Olivia, please fetch Miss Marry a glass of water.' Her voice is unyielding- and do your job- NOW. 'My request for forgiveness for her lack of- skills, Miss- she is only a 25 IQ-er, Olivia is our new intern- part of will help you suck at life program...

Please be seated as I do this to for her. Our RICHARD C. MAST will be an additional five or so moments.’ It does not matter what you do, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched, right- the girl asked- thinking- I said- do not... she went on saying something that is like you after you take your hands away- is what matters- right. Shut up! She said to it... Olivia returns with a glass of iced water on a hot plate. RICHARD C. MAST insists on all his employees being blonde... dumb shits...?

‘Here you go, Miss.’ And she dumps it down my lap... ‘Thank you.’ Dumb Shit! I muttered under my breath... ‘We need not be let alone... the dumb one said to me... were a danger to ourselves’ and others... We need to be bothered occasionally to see if we are alive. How long is it since you were bothered- how about now by you, About something important, about something real?’ Stop asking dumb question’s... I said to her... that does not matter in today’s life. Echoing on the sandstone floor this blonde tramp over to the large desk, her heels clicking. She sits down, and they both continue their dumb ass work they do not know how to do well. I have worn the wrong clothes, yet ones more- too sexy, I am wondering idly if that is legal... do look as I do for this...?

Humm? I questioned it... buying a short low-cut dress. She seems to excel at jumping from her seat. She is more nervous than me... looking at me! Sex is all that it is about- right- it is all they want, these days. Olivia turns and says my job is done as she goes through the door. Good, now I do not have to hear that running in my ears.

Olivia jumped up and called the trains. I do not hear the reply... to over niceness. The others turn and look at me as I get up showing way too much skin, they are all seeing all of me- upskirt shot here, some girls smile at the look of my pussy-in-a- their dark eyes crinkling at the corners getting all they want to remember about me. 'You don't need to knock - just go in.' She smiles kindly. 'Good afternoon, ladies this man said to them,' he says as he departs through the sliding door looking at all my- eyes dropping at then up.

3

I am trying so hard not to overwhelm my nerves, as I stand unsteadily. Get-together my schoolbag, I leave my glass of water and make my way to the moderately open door- to be shown the way. The door just thrust open as I stumble through- always trapping and clumsy, tripping over my own feet, and tumbling headfirst into the office- where he sits- looking at me with sex eye. Double dog freaking shit dick suck- bite me- I said- as I walked in- good- entrance miss he said... as I am still falling over my two left feet! I am on my hands and knees in the doorway to RICHARD C. MAST's office, and gentle hands are around me helping me to stand- they were his- a young hot thing that I was falling for just by the look of well that. I am so embarrassed, damn my clumsiness. I must steel myself to glance up. Holy cow - he is so young.

He extends a long-fingered hand to me once I am upright. 'I'm RICHARD C. MAST- are you all right would you like to sit?'

So young - and attractive, extremely attractive. He is tall, dressed in a fine gray suit, white shirt, and black tie with unruly dark copper-colored hair and intense, bright gray eyes that regard me shrewdly. It takes a moment for me to find my voice.

‘Um ‘I mutter. If this guy is over thirty, then I am a monkey's- uncle. In a daze, I place my hand in his and we shake. As our fingers touch, an odd exhilarating shiver runs through me. I withdraw my hand hastily, embarrassed. It must be static. I blink rapidly, my eyelids matching my heart rate. I hope you do not mind; I am the RICHARD C. MAST.’ ‘Are you- so?’ His voice warm sexual, perchance entertained, but it is difficult to tell from his impassive expression. He looks mildly interested, but polite. ‘Merry. I am studying English Literature with my girlfriend you no, um... High school intern... ‘I see he said nicely,’ I reasoned with himself some- I see the flicker of loss in the smile of his expression- given, but I am not sure. ‘Would you like to sit?’ He waves me toward a white leather buttoned L-shaped couch.

His office is way too big for just one man. In front of the floor-to-ceiling windows, there is a huge modern dark-wood desk that six people could comfortably eat around. It matches the coffee table by the couch. Everything else is white - ceiling, floors, and walls except on the wall by the door, where a mosaic of small paintings hangs, thirty-six of them arranged in a square.

They are exquisite - a series of mundane, forgotten objects painted in such precise detail they look like photographs. Displayed together, they are breathtaking.

‘A local artist. Trouton,’ says - when he catches my gaze.

‘They’re lovely. Raising the ordinary to extraordinary,’ I murmur, distracted both by him and the paintings. He cocks his head to one side and regards me intently.

‘I couldn’t agree more, Miss King,’ he replies, his voice soft and for some inexplicable reason, I find myself blushing.

‘I feel I’ve known you so many years?’ ‘For the reason that I like you,’ she said, ‘and I don’t want anything from you.’

Apart from the paintings, the rest of the office is cold, clean, and clinical. I wonder if it reflects the personality of Adonis who sinks gracefully into one of the white leather chairs opposite me.

I shake my head, disturbed at the direction of my thoughts, and retrieve Katie’s questions from my satchel. Dropping it twice on the coffee table in front of me.

Next, RICHARD C. MAST says nothing, waiting patiently - I hope - as I become increasingly embarrassed and flustered. I set up the mini-disc recorder and am all fingers and thumbs when I pluck up the courage to look at him, he is watching me, one hand relaxed in his lap and the other cupping his chin and trailing his long index finger across his lips. He is trying to suppress a smile.

‘Sorry,’ I hesitated, about me- being me. ‘I’m not used to all of this- or always like this- at least I try not to be.’ ‘Take as much time as you want, Miss,’ he says.

‘Once you have taken so-o much worry to set up the recorder on your phone - you ask me now?’ ‘Do you mind if I record your answers- that was my first question?’ I flush up some- beat red. I flutter my eye at him softly and sweetly, unsure what to say or do in front of this young attractive man, and he takes misfortune on me because he sympathizes at my age- and sheepishness. He is playful, mocking, full of fun and life, giving me, I hope not to just cut my writs with safety scissors- for being dumb.

‘No, I don't mind at all.’ This is what I said. ‘Did my girlfriend- explain what the interview was for?’ Same 10 questions all you kids ask- I get it. ‘Oh...!’

‘Surely, to give the impression in the matriculation issue of the student newspaper- I have to do this part of the graduating- thing... as I shall be discussing the grades at this year's graduation ceremony- with the higher up.’ Oh- um-hum!

This is news to me, ha- not really- your part of my program at the school- yep, I said. I frowned some, uninteresting my naughty thoughtfulness back to what I was asked to do- the job. Besides, I am momentarily pre-engaged by the thought that someone, not much older than I- okay, like I am 17 he is 30 years or so, and okay, mega-successful, likes me a little- like is going to present me with my degree- if I do all that he asks- ALL.

‘Good,’ I swallow nervously. ‘I have some questions, RICHARD C. MAST.’ I smooth a stray lock of hair behind my ear.

My cheeks heat at the realization- he is looking at me- like a boy that wants a hot heated horny to hook up, and I sit up, and fair my shoulders show my dress is not showing too much- to look taller- and doing so- his eyes move down- showing that now- just more threatening- kill him with sex and I have him eating me out- my hand that is. Yeah- that is the saying... 'I supposed you might,' he says, disapproving. He is amused at me- as he is looking for me over with a lot of intentions. Pressing the start button on the recorder, I try to look professional. I think- about all the books my granddad had all lost in the great fires, of things not to be known... it is all on here now- I look at my I phone/pad 20 on my wrist licked into my brain waves.

All that needs to be smart is done for you... at the swap of a finger. 'There must be something in books, something we cannot imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there, there is not the law said as they put my grandmother down- with them in flam. You do not stay for anything- the man in red and black said.' Remember the stories.

I snap out of my daydream- of all that is him- and the past. 'You're incredibly young to have amassed such an empire. To what are you in debt too with your success?' Like a god? No... I peep up at him- biting my lip. His smile is rueful, but he looks vaguely disappointed.

Yet- 'If you hide your lack of knowledge, no one will hate on you and you'll never- ever learn- from it.' 'Maybe you're just fortunate.' This is not on Katie's list of things to do. However, he is so superior. His eyes flare momentarily in surprise.

‘Business is all about individuals- dumber than smart, Merry, and I am particularly good at judging people- I can see what you are and what you will do for me already. ‘If you hide your ignorance, no one will hit you and you'll never acquire anything.’

I know how they tick you and me- how they think- and what you are thinking now about me Miss, what makes the show, what makes them cleverer, what motivates them and what does not, and how to incentivize them. I play the game to a point- you get what I am saying- I do not have to act- they all just want me- and want to be... for me being me. I am everything more than a God... to my pupates. So, I am a girl on a string for you- know you do as I say or walk. I see- I said shy biting my lip harder... as the strain of his tone.

I hire an extraordinary team... I would not stand for less than that. ‘If not, they can take their ass out my door and not waste my time, I have no time for shit on a silver plate- Miss- passed off as good food- aka good work-in this case.’ and I give compensation well- to those that earn it.

Um- I said along- ‘With school turning out more racers, steeplechasers, competitors, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and creative creators, the word 'scholarly,' unquestionably, technologically advanced the swear word it is worthy to be.’ I get what you are saying- I have always done more than other girls. Um You do know this is going to a paper- right? A word or word...? Um... he said that is cute and a sweet thought.

He pauses and fixes me with his somber stare- yet lustful- and unfulfilled in his accomplishments- something was missing- with him I thought. 'My certainty is to attain victory and many trumpets in any structure one must make oneself dominant of that structure... I know it inside and out- just like felling you out inside and out, (That is what he was doing felling me out.) -know every detail- about a young woman.

'I work firm and freak hard- whit the ones that want to freak, extremely hard. I make decisions based on reason and truth. Figuring all the ass holes and pussies in the process.' Um- like- do you want me to write that down word or word? Sure...! He said- I am so sick of this... same things by girls like you... what do you want to know... I have an ordinary gut character, that can spot and encourage a good dense inkling and good individuals. The result is, it is always down to a good society.'

'I do not contribute to luck or chance or what some call blessings, Miss. I and I only have done this... The firmer I work the better breaks I seem to have- by curing out those that believe in something that is not real to me. It is all about having the right individuals on your side and pointing their energies in the right direction for that reason.

'You sound like someone that has to have full control not letting it all go till you say or time is do.' The words are out of my mouth before I can stop them, for sounding too sexual.

'Oh, I exercise control to in other ways, I said to him,' I bet you do he said, with a trace of wit in his sweet smile. I look at him, and he holds my gaze steadily,

impassive. My heartbeat quickens and my pussy. tightens, and my face flushes again and he feels me in. I wish he would stop doing that... looking at me like he wants to freak hard... and not stop until I come 10 or more times on him. Why? Why does he have such a demoralizing result on me, yet so flawless... in everything he says. Um- He continues, his voice soft.

His overwhelming good looks. The way his eyes intensity blue at me. The way he strokes his index finger in and against his lower lips then touching my face with the other its right... sweet hot steamy lust. 'Do you feel that you have an enormous power of your girls to do as you say?' Taking them for your bitches? You are not like most schoolchildren I had in here... I like that you do not mind speaking your mind, yet I would have to teach you to be humble... wouldn't I? -And obedient... he said. I immense power... of all my workers in here and out... developed by promising control over all things.

You were not born into this I would say- you need to stick to the page. It is secret... in that, its reveries that you made your money by having your mom and dad hand it to you?' No... cute... go on, he said.

My mouth drops open- when he said you need to shut the freak up. I am staggered by his lack of unpretentiousness; you see... punk kids like you piss me off... so... you want me to freak you has nothing to do with me getting this job? 'Sure, it doses... yet you must be right- in all ways. What are the ways- yell see in time?'

This is recorded you no... I said shaking my legs together by his hand touching me softly.

‘It is all about the influence and feeling it, if you will, with me. If I were to decide that I was no longer involved in the communications occupational and sell up, twenty-five thousand individuals would skirmish to make their hypothecation expenditures after a month or so has passed.’ ‘I employ over fifty thousand public, Miss. That gives me a certain sense of obligation to do whatever I do, the way I want to do it, and how- when, and why... it is all my say... or no say at all.’ You get that- Marry Shah? He said sternly.

‘Do I brother you- sir-asking a dumb question, that I have to ask for your freaking program that I give jack shit about... because really, I could be home playing with myself right now... and coming in some boy’s photo- I don’t need this?’

~*~

‘Don't you have a board to answer to?’ I ask, disgusted. Why you- I do not have them- your answer to me... and me alone... I over rolled them and pushed them out-it is all my say. ‘I own my establishments, they do not- why would I have ass wipes tell me how to do my shit. I am the Trump of my day and age... what do you say about that? I can go if this is too hard on you? He just smiled. As I lean forward showing my boobs some... just some. I do not have to answer a board.’ If that was the dumb question.

He raises an eyebrow at me just muttering on about nothing. I flush, even more, unquestionably you are the God, here, right? Cute Miss... move on, he said. I would know this if I had done some research. Not knowing all about me shows that your shy and weak... and have a lack of respect for who I am, he is so arrogant- I thought. I change tack, and see that I am not even halfway done... 'Do you have anything you love to do outside of your work?' 'Like- That's the question- go for it...'

'I have diverse hobbies, Miss.' A hint of a smile touches his lips- yet-

those eyes are still locked into mine- not letting go. 'Very wide-ranging.' And for some reason, I am mystified and frenzied by his firm stare into my heart looking into my eyes... wet at this point from being reamed too hard. His eyes are ablaze, like mine with some fantastic and nasty sexual thoughts of him just pounding the shit out of me with his lusting sex making.

4

'Do you believe in love at first sight?' Why did I ask? 'Just curiosity...!' He said... looking in my love-stricken, and lovesick eyes. Yes, I was taken back by him... yet could not show it... 'Nonetheless, if you work so hard, what do you do unwind- or just relax?' He smiles, revealing textbook and twilight novel white teeth so right yet so wrong, I stop breathing and forget how too- like. He is beautiful- for an older man- I felt all hot down under. No one should be this good-looking, and make a young lady feel this way about herself. It is just not fair for us girls.

‘Well, to ‘chill out’ as you put it - I sail, I fly, I indulge in various physical pursuits.’ He shifts in his chair. ‘I’m a very wealthy man, Miss King, and I have expensive and absorbing hobbies.’ I peek swiftly at Katie’s questions, wanting to get off this subject of sex and work. ‘You invest in engineering. Why, precisely?’ Did I enquire about the thought- why? Why- does he make me so uneasy, anxious, nervous, and troubled? ‘I like to form things into submission bending and shipping them.’

I like to know how all things work to crack all that it is- to see- what makes it tick: what makes things tick, how to construct and deconstruct. As well as I have a love of ships. ‘What can I say?’ one thing I have not cracked is a woman’s mind... ‘That thuds of a sound to me like your heart speaking rather than reason and specifics.’ ‘Though there are individuals who would say I don’t have any emotions of warmth- that I am just cold and heartless.’ He stares appraisingly at me, and his mouth coincidences up, well said- perchance. ‘For the reason that they know me well- or so they think they do.’ His lip ringlets in an ironic beam. ‘Why would they say that?’

‘I am seventeen and I am crazy or so they say- yet smart enough to be here. My grandfather said the two always try. When people ask your age, he- said, always say seventeen and insane- it will enlighten them.’

I went on asking-would you say that you are someone that makes- friends easily; or that you have any? Otherwise, are you easy to get to know?’ Plus, I regret the question as soon as I say it. It is not on Katie’s list; it was on mine to see if he was at all like me one or less loyal friends.

‘I am a precise secluded person, Miss. I for one go a long way to defend- my disclosure. I do not often give dialogs out too public,’ he is voiced softens as the sentence went off into a long one on like lost in a rambling thought. ‘Why did you come to an understanding to do this one then?’

‘The decent writer touches’ on life often like a lusting young girl.

The unexceptional ones run a quick hand over her. Feeling in all the voids, the bad ones’ rape her and leave her for the bugs to eat away the leftovers.’ So- for all aims and determinations, I could not get Katie off my back.

I know how stubborn Katie can be. That is why I am sitting here wriggling- unpleasantly under his all-pervading gaze- that is yet so perfect when I should be studying for my exams- or just doing what she was doing herself- right? ‘Like- she asked repeatedly, and harried my PR folks, and yours truly respects that kind of stubbornness.’

‘You also invest in unindustrialized knowhow. Why are you absorbed- in this area of writing when there are no good books anymore- is it all sexed up media and shit you want to give out to horny kids to read less than 3 lines on their buzzing boxes- to kill their brains even more?’ ‘I have to put up with it- Miss- for its sales... SEX, DUGS, and be-bop-pop music are what it’s all about- yet I want more out of your text- if you work for me.’

‘NOT- All visuals... without gluten...? ‘We can't consume money if- there is no bread, Miss, and there are too many people on this planet who don't have enough

to eat- that is good for you.’ You get what I am saying to you?’ Is it something you feel zealous about? Like- Nursing the world poor do you help the one in this county that is in need?’

‘That sounds very humanitarian... sure- whatever they want to suck out of me... right?’ Whatever looks good... He moves his shoulders up and down in a way that was not okay to me. ‘Feeding the world's poor, I can't see the financial benefits of this, it's discerning business,’ he murmurs, though he is being insincere. It does not make sense - only the virtue of the idyllic. I peek at the next question that is on my list made by Katie, disorderly by his arrogance I shudder to look up. ‘Is there a method to your madness?’

I asked the question. If so, what is it?’ I do not have a method to the way I do things- I just make it work- for I make it work- how is that? A supervisory belief - Carnegie's: ‘A man who gets the ability to take full ownership of his mind, may take proprietorship of whatsoever else to which he is justly permitted.’ I am very extraordinary, single-minded. I like order- of myself- and all other things in this thing we call life, and those all around me.’

5

‘You come off like the decisive purchaser.’ ‘I want to earn to possess- them, but yes, bottom line, I do.’ ‘So-o you want to possess things?’ You are a control freak. ‘I am... if you want to say I am Miss. Say what you like really- they all do your age.’ He smiles, but the smile does not touch his eyes.

Again, this is at odds with someone who wants to feed the world, so I- cannot help thinking that we are talking about something else, but I am mystified as to what it is. I swallow hard. The temperature in the room is rising or it is just me. I just want this interview to be over.

Surely, Katie has enough material now. I glance at the next question.

‘You were adopted- like me, there was a story that came over for- another county other than the US. Is that true- or not? Do you think your past made you who you are today? Too personal? Yes- but I go there- it has not... I made me. Oh, this is, asking too much... I gaze at him in the love needing eyes, hoping he is not offended- by my stupid. His brows channel together downward and arch. My curiosity is annoyed by him I could tell... ‘I have no way of knowing.’ ‘How old were you when you were approved into a stable home?’ I was 5 and used to my mother. ‘That’s a matter of public record, Miss- you can get that anywhere.’ His tone is harsh. I flush up yet again. Crap... I say in my head- yet he heard that also. They all can be the ones that monitor everything I do, I thought and actions.

I move on quickly... doing whatever it is I am doing. Yes of course - if I had known this, I was doing this interview and did not want to be-and the- school voices hearing was saying, I was losing grading... I would have done some research more now if I did not shape up. ‘You’ve had to lose of family life for your work-life... would you say that is so-o?’

He said: 'I will embrace on to all God's creatures tight one day. I have one finger on it now; that is a beginning- by banning all that you call- literature. I am the reason all books were a band; I want complete control.'

Why do you not want us to read? Why- is the question that you must crack? If you do not get it- then neither do I. He said... 'That's not a question- or anything to ask.' He is terse me some, with his long lines of wording rambling.' Apologetic I was to this...' I wriggle some in my set feeling wet down there, and he has made me feel like an errant child. I will try it again. 'Have you had to sacrifice family life for your work?'

'I have a family. I have a brother and a sister and two loving parents. I am not interested in extending my family beyond that.' 'So-o are- your quire/ gay...?' I rolled my eyes knowing that was not on the list nevertheless, I wanted an A on my report. I may have had a past that I do not like but it was never with another man.

'What are you gay?' He said... I know that you have kissed, and made oral love to a girl your roommate Katie, by your racing thoughts, I heard it all and do not hold it agent you... why do you with me? RICHARD C. MAST...? Has nothing to do with the sex or whom you have that with... now does it.'

He inhales suddenly thinking and sees my going down on a girl in his- mind, and I cringe, mortified... my thoughts... Crap! I said, yet once more in my mind to cover up. Why, didn't I employ filter before, I read this straight out? How can I tell

him I am just reading the questions? Damn Katie and her curiosity, said this in my mind, that it would be okay to say to him!

~*~

‘No, Miss, I’m not the way you are- and your young teen why’s.’ Yet I can see you having fun when you are young. And work hard when you are not. He raises his one eyebrow, with an unruffled glow in his eyes. He does not look pleased about me and my girly past- like he wanted me or something. I fast like said- I- a man too...The voices in my head... giggle at this point knowing. You are a hopeless romantic,’ he said that all not knowing or knowing what you want. The same things could be in the 'business premises families' nowadays. The same immeasurable feature and awareness could be projected through the radios and televisions but are not. ‘It would be funny if it were not serious. It does not book you need; it is some of the things that once were in books.

No, no it is not booked at all you are looking for! Take it where you can- find it, in old phonograph records, old motion pictures, and in old friends; look for it in nature and look for it in yourself. Books were only one type of receptacle where we stored a lot of things, we were afraid we might forget. There is nothing magical in them at all. The magic is only in what books say, how they stitch the patches of the universe together into one garment for us. Of course, you could not know this, you still cannot understand what I mean when I say all this. You are intuitively right, that is what counts.

‘I apologize. It is um... written here.’ It is the first time he has said my name. My heartbeat has accelerated, and my cheeks are heating up again.

Nervously, I tuck my loosened hair behind my ear. He cocks his head to one side slightly. ‘These- ‘are not’ your questions, are they?’ They are not... I said back. The blood drains from my head, and I feel as if I passed out some- going all black. Oh no, it flashed past in my head. ‘Katie - Miss. - she assembled the queries to go on with.’ She rushed in with her wording- ‘Nobody listens anymore. I cannot talk to the walls because, they are screaming at me, walls -those things you look at all the time like cells and notebooks- ‘I cannot talk to my loved ones overall this’- he said; she listens to the walls. I just want someone to hear what I have to say. And maybe if I talk long enough it will make complete sense. Then I asked it as a lost little schoolchild want more- saying- ‘Then I want you to teach me to comprehend what I read.’ ‘Are you, colleagues, on the student paper?’

‘No, she’s my roommate not my love of marge- we’re just leaving together.’ Oh, rat crap, I said in my mind- yet he knows. I have nothing to do with the student paper, the girl said, he could see snapshots of Katie playing with herself not want to be a part of all this... It is her extra-curricular activity I said, not mine as of this moment.

My face is aflame in embarrassment- of diddling. He rubs his stubbed hair chin, in the quiet debate, his blue eyes assessing me. ‘Did you volunteer to do this interview?’ he asks, his voice deadly quiet. Hang on, who is hypothetical to be

interrogating whom, His eyes tingle into me- like, and I am obliged to answer with the certainty.

‘I was conscripted to this... She is not well.’ My voice is weak and- apologetic, for her... yet they know the truth. ‘We're not finished here, Andrea. Please cancel my next meeting.’

Where are you from? A small town- she said along with these-small towns are fun places; everybody thinks they know everybody. They bought, they sold, live in fear of getting old, getting cold. Life to death, it is all a myth just a wish, only to walk in the dark, to make their mark, in the life they embark.

Yet they know what is so, nowhere to run nowhere to go, they come- and go, with nothing to show. With some that are high and some low. However, they always know narrow minds never change, only to rearrange, in the exchange. Memories never fade, and the ones that make their lies get paid. It is all slipping away from day today. There is always someone with something to say. Whatever comes, whatever may, it is just another day... in a small town, with dreams going in the ground, with only names on rocks to be found.

Where one person runs it all and is crowned, we dance like fools we are- her clowns. That is just life bowing down to a small town, it is just the words going around. With so much doom and gloom, lonely nights in a room.

‘That explains a great deal.’ He said...

‘RICHARD C. MAST, forgive me for interjecting, but your next meeting is in two or- four minutes.’ ‘You do not have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.’ He spoke. The girl from before is back speaking out of context. She appears lost popping in and out. He turns his head slowly to face her and raises his eyebrows. She flushes bright pink in the face at the why I and he is treating her lack of life. Oh good... you did what was asked of you... good for you... no go be somewhere. It is not just me... or kids getting dumb-er...? I asked...

‘Where were we, Miss?

‘Some individuals turn sad unpleasantly early in their life. Non-singular motive, it gives the impression, but then again, they are almost innate that way. The staining unceremonious, tire quicker, exclamation more rapidly, evoking lengthier and, as I say, get melancholy younger than anyone else in the ecosphere. I know, for I am one of them, back in the days of before.’ ‘Please don't let me keep you from anything.’ Say all that is on your mind. ‘Very well, RICHARD C. MAST,’ then, he frowns some in his long chat to me and turns his consideration back to the rambling on.

She said: ‘There has to be something in books, something we can’t visualize, to make a lady stay in a scorching house; there must be- something there that we all need something more unexplained.’

Oh, we are back to 'Miss' now.

He murmurs... on getting softer in his voice, and then he gazes- intensely into my love-stricken eyes; all humor was gone when he did that and we locked, and

bizarre muscles deep in my lower than my belly clench suddenly in hard lust. His blue eyes are alight with the wicked curiosity of all, that is me and inside my- heart, soul, and more.

Which I should be studying for now rather than sitting in your palatial, swanky, sterile office, feeling uncomfortable under your penetrating gaze.

But you cannot make people listen. They must come 'round in their own time, wondering what happened, and why the world blew up around them.

It cannot last...

6

'Don't you look so guiltless- over all that took place, why didn't you give me a biography, he made me feel like such an idiot for economical on the basic-investigation.' Katie locks a hand to her mouth. Saying: 'Jeez, babe, I'm sorry - I didn't think about it all the way through.' I feel some grumpiness coming over me with my changing mood.

'Typically, he was well-mannered, prescribed, stuffy- like he is old before his time. He does not dialog like a man of twenty-something. How old is he anyway?' 'Twenty-seven. Jeez, I am sorry, Merry, I should have briefed you, but I was in such dread. Let me have the mini chip for your headset, and I will start transliterating the interview, it is the least I can do.' Hell, you just want to replay the video admit it!

‘U_NO_IT!’ She flashed in my mind, as text to read like a hologram, yet I could see it in front of my eyes passing by like a ticker.

‘You look better. Did you eat your dehydrated soup- and mac and- cheese?’

I ask her to move to food not sex to change the subject. That is all you do anymore is eat, sleep, bitch about that, and C*M!

Yepper- and I’m-a proud of it- she said- humping her pillow!

‘Certainly, and it was delightful, enjoyable, and lovely, as usual. I am having the sensation of feeling much better than I did.’ She smiles at me in gratitude. I checked my watch. ‘I have to run, I can still make my shift at Macy’s, as a clerk, I don’t even think; I well- shower off, I’m going to just come home and do this more-like, um- so why to bother... right...?’

Um- yeah- that turns me on- I said... NOT! You are getting to be lazy and gross! Yes, but you love me so... ‘Merry, you’ll be exhausted- to see me tonight I just know it.’ ‘I will be fine, until you get back, all by myself- a lot in my wandering thoughts. I will see you later... she runs out the door slip on a dress with nothing under it.’

Katie- I am the shit at any DIY. I have worked at Macy’s since I started working when I was 14. It is the major self-determining man/woman’s wear store in the New York area, and over the four years I have worked here for too long, I have come to know a little bit about most everything we sell - underwire to even I do not wear them ever- although unluckily, I leave all that to my dad to say it is wrong.

Merry- I am much more of a curl-up-with-a-book-in-a-comfy-chair-by the-
fire-with-coffee- kind-a- of-a girl and have everything in its place on me and of me,
yet she works for me.

Katie- I am glad I can make my shift, to have some money to play with at
the end of the week. I bet I could buy you a mill. He said to me... Katie and you let
him? Yes... I spoke. To be there whenever he wants, she asked.

No comment... I did I give- her.

I am home looking over my report, it gives me something to have my-
emphasis on other them all of him- all of him. We are eventful - it is the start of the
summertime of year, and folks are redecorating their homes. My friends that I work
with were happy to see me, as always... it has become custom with us.

‘Marry Sue! I thought you were not going to make it today- I was going in-
to work a JC Penny's at 5 ‘till-10.’ And then it back home to be with my cuddle bug,
she looks forward to me... ‘My tasks of suck did not take as long as I thought. I can
do a couple of hours of this I said lost in the thoughts of him- and then her and then
him and then- him- him- her- aww.’

‘I'm pleased to see you, it was him- look down at me I am looking- up so
much small, he's just so-o right.’ She and he start re-stocking shelves for me say that a
short girl should not be doing this job, and I am soon absorbed in the task, yet lost in
love- of being in love. And- aw- yes with him... I stumble backward and he saves me
from falling... like to my death... or something... it was sweet. When I arrive home

later, Katie is wearing headphones, seeing all that happen, she is pissed, and working on her laptop, frantically editing by down report that I was okay with leaving as is.

Her nose and puss-puss still pink for having a head could for giving-wellhead to random high school boys, the day before- she a good kid what can I say- it pays, but she has her unfiltered wording into a story now, so she is focused and typing furiously run-ons. I flush, by her and the thoughts of him also... I was feeling both.

I am methodically exhausted - dog-tired- by the long drive back home- even if I was looking over the past days of my life on the windshield screen of the car, the exhausting think about the interview, she had my pc on the luster rock tabletops by my bed, and my c*m covered dildo at her feet, she thinks that more loving or something to our mine.

I slump on to the couch with for more- sexy time, foreplay, and boob-playing, thinking about the essay I must finish and all the studying I have not done today because I was holed up with... him and getting her and me off more than 50 times today- yet that is the norm. I flush, and my heart rate inexplicably increases with ever stock in and out of my puss, and her rubbing my clit- that was not the reason, surely, He just wanted to show me around so I could see that he was lord of all he surveyed, and I was thanking him and that man too. I realize I am biting my lip, and I hope Katie does not notice. But she seems absorbed in her text. I see him over there giving me the eye- He wanted to spend more time with you, they said- why not take it one noise teacher said.'

I should have- but the task was done to its fullest-no?

‘Yes’- ‘we all do.’

‘You’ve got some good things said here, Merry, so well done, is- what the team say going sitting in the broad room at school as there were reading the copy on their handheld notebooks. I cannot believe you did not take him up on his offer to show you around. I hear what you mean about formal, here in your writing a little to stuff-ie said the same one.

That is fine I would rather have that than what I have been getting- with- the other girls it was nothing but sexed up sex- and sex talk, so I will take this over having to read that. Yet he has asked for you- not them to be with him more... do you want it? Did you take any notes on being his girl?’ she asks.

She gives me a short-lived puzzled look, as to why I have made it in.

‘Um... no, I didn’t,’ I said.

Why?

‘I didn’t think it needed to be that also, to be a writer.’

‘That’s fine I see the point you are making. Did I make a fine article with this... then right? Good-looking son of a bitch, isn’t he? Said the one... yah why her. I overhear when walking out the door getting a pat on the back by the older woman that had some brains.’ ‘I suppose so, I said looking at her and shyly smiling.’ I try hard to

sound neutral, and I succeed, yah no. ‘Oh come on, Marry - even you can't be immune to his looks.’

She arches an eyebrow perfectly at me, in the cute way that only she- can. Crap is what I said! I distract her with flattery, and sweetness, always a good ploy on this girl who loves me for doing such. ‘You probably would have got a lot more out of him, if you would have done what you did to me with him and on him- she said.’ Think of something - quick, I knew what she was going to ask- and I thought quickly. ‘So, what did you think of him?’ Damn it, she is nosey. Why cannot she just let this go, about me and him, and what I must do. ‘I doubt that Merry.

Come on – he is nearly taking over your job. Given that I personally- imposed this on you at the last minute, you did very well then.’ She glances up at me speculatively. I make a hasty retreat into the kitchen.

‘You, fascinated by a man, more than me and what I must give and- gave you. That is a first,’ she snorts, you give me more than what I boy can. She rolled her eyes at me. ‘He's very driven about what he wants in life unlike you, you have no drive to do extortionately, yet unlike you here is controlling, and arrogant with me - scary really, how to overpower he is... but very alluring. I can understand the fascination,’ I add truthfully, as I peer ‘round the door at her hoping this will shut her up finally. I started gathering the makings of a sandwich so she cannot see my face, as I walk to the counter, there all no walls everything is see-through glass, even the bathroom is open to the world outside.

Dumb- ‘Why, did you want to know if your gay or not, incidentally, that was the most embarrassing question, I am not I just love you’re for you get me, I was mortified.’ I scowl with my nose wrinkling at the memory of seeing this in my eyes passing by like a movie clip- like It was so-o embarrassing. The whole thing was uncomfortable. I am glad I will never-ever-ever- must lay eyes on him again.’

‘Oh, Marry Sue, it can't have been that bad- yah no. he sounds- quite taken with you, like love-ie and shit.’ Taken with me, what does that mean, now do not be ludicrous, in jumping the gun. ‘Would you like a sandwich,’ ‘ha- that all I do for you have sex with you and make you a sandwich- and do your chores’’.’

‘Please- and think.’

‘Yah- yah- yah- suck it she said. ‘You don’t have one or I would.’ I- said back. I curl up in my bed with her, wrapping my throw around me, that she made me in 8th grade, then I close my eyes, with her around me, and I am instantly asleep, could he do this for me I thought before the lights went out.

That night I dream of dark places, of loss, and death, and sadness.

7

For the rest of the week, I throw myself into my studies and my shitty-ass job that sucks hairy balls.

Katie is busy too do her and, compiling about her last publication of- her student in the schools weekly, E-paper; before she must surrender it to the new editor

while also shoving for her finals. Damn, but that girl was in the wrong place at the wrong time in the wrong century with her work life, you stay home back in the 2,000's and play with yours back then, not these days, where a girl wants to be independent.

By the time I finish, its midnight, and Katie has long since gone to- bed. I made my way to my room, exhausted, but pleased that I have accomplished so much on a Monday. She is bored and wants something to occupy her time, but she has the attention span of a guppy. It will be something new next week.

So, I call my mom using my mind as a phone, to check on her, but- also so she can wish me luck for my final exams. She proceeds to tell me about her latest venture into pot making and art- that so bad she cannot put it into words. My mother is all about new business ventures that are flopping.

Katie- By Friday, she is much better the day before I felt, and I no- longer must endure the sight of her PJs, which should have just stayed off. We did not talk all that much more that evening, to my relief. Once we have eaten, I am able to sit at the banqueting table with Marry and, while she works on her article, I work on my essay about the Holocaust.

Merry- hard to chat, think about how- leaving her behind was wrong in- her mind- I hesitate, and I have Mom's full attention. She, my mother that is worried about me- being young and small and what man can do to me. She wants me to be with the girl, not someone that only there to take... I hope she has not mortgaged the household to finance this latest organization.

‘I’m fine,’ I said. Do you need money, honey? You worry me.’

‘No- I want to do this on my own.’ ‘You sure’ - ‘Mom, I’m fine just leave it alone.’

It is a brief conversation; it is even hard to get done with. It is not so much so a conversation as kicks my guts and make me grunt in response to my gentle sweet-talking of not be mean, Its Friday night, Katie and I are debating what to do with our evening, other than bedtime, - we want some time away from the studying also, and from our working too hard for less than a \$1. 50 an hour, and from student newspapers, that only pays 50 cents a word, and that is if it passes the editor.

Sometimes, like I marvel and have curiosity about the thoughts of if there's- something wrong with me. I have spent too long in the company of my literary romantic book or cracking my brainwriting, or gutting on out rubbing it, and consequently my ethics, and opportunities are far too high. Nonetheless, in realism, nobody has ever made me feel like that, by her- yet he could too- maybe? Saturday at the store is a nightmare. And the days keep rushing by without any other's thoughts of him or her... what to do?

8

I am engrossed in the task of redoing what was done right in the first- place, read-through the items I need to have said in the right ways, and the items I sure I know have missed that were there, my eyes are flicking from the order E-book that I

have from the past on proficient writing, to the computer screen and back as I check the entries match.

Then, for some motive, I glance up... and find myself locked in the- bold gray gaze of Chiaz who is standing at the counter of my home as a hologram to investigate me doing what it is I am doing he can do this at any time investigate me, staring at me intently, with lust in his eyes even if it is just a simulation. My heart failure fasts- knowing what is next, sex- with him not there but in my body, he is.

‘Merry... What a surprise, I said walking to my dad her, I lay down for him to the move through me.’ His gaze is firm and intense, and the moment happens fast. Holy crap...!

‘He said my name,’ In a mutter. ‘What can I help you with, RICHARD C. MAST?’

‘RICHARD C. MAST,’ I whisper at the start, because that is all I can call him as-not my lover yet. What is he doing here looking at me this way with my messy- hair and nude boy standing here, my mouth has dropped open- like my legs and pussy for him, and I cannot locate my brain or my voice, for sighing too much? There is a ghost of a smile on his lips and his eyes are alight with humor as if he is enjoying some private joke.

‘I was in the area,’ he says by way of exclamation. ‘I need to stock- up on a few things. It is a pleasure to see you again and feel the insides of you in though out,

Miss Marry Sue.' His voice is warm and dry like milk melted chocolate fudge on ice-cream all melt-ie... or something like that- mmm.

My heart is pounding a frantic, and for some reason, I am blushing-furiously under his steady inspection of being perfect in every way possible.

He smiles, and again it is like he is privy to some big secret.

My reminiscences of him did not do him justice, in this dim light, He's not simply good-looking - he is the epitome of male exquisiteness, magnificent, I shake my head and take my wits of the dead and prowls, I was humming yet I was with his body and mind with my eyes tight.

Finally, my intellectual functions are restored and re-joined with the rest of my body. I am utterly thrown by the sight of him standing before me, and he is here in my always now. Even at the Store, I feel him.

Go figure...? It is so disconcerting the way I feel after also this being his little slut, yet I want it so bad. Taking a deep breath, I go down on him hard, one more I said it is fine, I put on my professional life out of my mind to be with him.

I've- worked hard today so maybe this is okay. he murmurs, his blue eyes cool but smiling like mine. I mutter, my voice soft and wavy moving in my mind. Get a grip, I said, after a half-hour or so my legs are abruptly the uniformity of Jell-O. I am so eager, I decided to wear my best jeans this morning to work just to show him that I love to look this way for him to see through me, like looking into the glass shingling

back in his stare, of mine, I try for indifference as I come out from behind the counter, but I am concentrating hard on not falling over my own feet.

My voice is a little too bright, walking ‘around the store today. I glance up at him in regret, yet it is only me that knows he is there like, it almost immediately. Damn, he is handsome. I blush, looking downward... and the others in my day have no idea what has happened to me. Acting nuts... ‘After you,’ he murmurs in my head, gesticulating with his long-fingered, gorgeously manicured hand. With my heart almost throttling me to the point of crazy - because it is in my throat trying to escape from my mouth like he is trying to get out of me from down under.

His fingers trail across the various packages displayed that I have done on the shaving, like the same can be said the way he is touching his fingers over my lips, face and- hair, and for some incomprehensible reason, I must look away for all in the store and close my eyes tightly for my little girlfriend to release. He bends and selects a packet.

‘These will do simply fine this way he said to me looking over my job that is not where I want to be,’ he says with his oh-so-secret smile within me, and I blush, and he finds me to be sweet and cute. ‘Nope, it was so revamping,’ he says quickly then smirks and it shows all over my face, and I have the uncanny feeling that he is laughing at me, for shacking it out so hard, in public. And the boss knows it, yet that is the first week dating play-no?

Why, why? -would this beautiful, powerful, urbane man want to see me?
No way can I see it! I dismiss it immediately for feeling like this on the job. I asked,
and my voice is too high in my thoughts, he gets me like I have my finger trapped the
head site mic too hard. Damn! Try to be cool, Marry Sue!

He gazes at the selection of tops and undies, that I have places nicely in
their lines, what on this Earth is he going to do with those, I cannot picture him as a
do-it-yourselfer at all, doing woman's work like this... I flush at my foolish wayward
thoughts. 'All part of your feed-the-world plan?' I tease... in a dirty thought of what
happening when I get home.

'Something like that,' he acknowledges, and his lips quirk up in a smile
showing on my face. 'Is there anything else, I need to do I said to my boss at the store?'
'I would like to see you do your job faster without daydreaming. Go home... I do not
even want to look at you. You are a waste of my time.' 'Are you redecorating?' The
words are out before I can stop them. Surely, he hires laborers or has the staff to help
him decorate? I glance behind me as he follows, always in my mind now- even going
into the girl's room, Am I that funny, I said shyly or Funny looking down there? Ha-
he said- just keep being you! And I give that look of confusion...?

...?...

Blink- Blink!

-Hair shaking out-

-Ponytail left to go- hair flap over right shoulder-

‘This way,’ I murmur uncomfortably about the way I look.

‘Have you worked here long; he is teasing me with- dumb...’ His voice is low and soft make me feel well wet, and he is gazing at me, with blue soulful eyes concentrating hard like his dick sliding inside me, for the first time the days before. I blush even more brightly.

Why does he have this significance on me? Changing into a dress and of uniform- that now gross- cover in girly-ness. I feel like I am- threatened years old down there and in here and there too - awkward, as always, and out of place is everything about me. My eyes drop, yet he must look me up and down!

‘One week,’ I mutter as we reach our goal, of me, feel good with him in- all places. To distract me from being his lover, I reach down and select the two widths apart and let him go to town on my clit, at this point I could have the world give to me for him doing so. It is zapping through me like I have touched an exposed wire, it comes out, which I pass to him too in the feelings also. Our fingers brush very briefly in handholding and mind kissing, and the current is there again, I gasp my boobs and he can feel it in his hands-like unwillingly as I feel it, all the way down to somewhere dark, and unexplored even with my eyes still tight, deep in my belly I feel this rush.

Very much, I scrabble around for my symmetry- as I know the cameras- in the bathroom have gotten it all on a video puck (aka thumb drive.) Yet all they see is me having fun with myself- yet the one that looks over this all get it- yet not my boss

of now. 'Anything else I said as he dresses me through my body?' My voice is dry and breathy, own like my body. His eyes widen slightly in mine.

'This way to the door I said.' I duck my head down, as I pass all the-snacking girls I work with like I try to hide my recurring blush, and head for the aisle out of the store, to a floating lot of cars folded up. (The poor girl- said the old lady-looking over it all.)

9

I halt at his expression going to my car that is just lower my way like a cab, his eyes deepening shad in mine. Color fading like... trembling, yet again- his fingers now deep inside me on the drive home, I feel like such a slut- yet I must have it- even if I was good. This boy will not stop... Quickly, with, I measure aware that his hot I gaze back into my mind of him wanting all of me. I dare not look at him like a little girl, yet I cannot help it he is my first.

Holy- jizz'n jeez, could I feel, like any more self-conscious, about me-being me, done... the back pocket of my jeans is my Id to get into my home, by some miracle, I remember to bring it along this time- I merge not to remove a finger away for my real age, of how I jumped four years in high school for being smart. Why must I feel like a little girl... yet he is making me a woman?

10

I know by the end of this year that he and I, we have c*mmmed in each other's body or through each body by concentration manipulation of thoughts 2,165 times.

(Forward one year)

I must not sleep with it wet, yet just I live life too fast and too young to care, I must not sleep with it wet. I am trying to brush my hair into submission. I am mopping with frustration at myself in the mirror for sucking hard at everything... and yes even that too. Damn my hair to hell for sucking more than that also. I should be studying and going to school for the day, for my final exams, which are less than a year and a week away, my only option is to confine my naughty hair in a pigtail after, yet another long night of him pounding me, and hope that I look semi-presentable, when I can even if as if I can walk out the door.

Katie is huddled on the couch in the living room doing her, I ignore my pang of unwelcome sympathy for doing what I want to do all day too. You should get back to bed and be with me all day piss on the school she said. Would you like some Nyquil or Tylenol, to get knocked out?' 'Nyquil, please, as I spend some time with her 'till she passed out, and then, I leave her clingy hug as she is laying on our bed and go to school.

'Okay, I am going. Get back to bed with me she said. I made you some postage to heat up later.' I stare at her fondly as if she were my one and only lover. I cannot believe that I must do all this for you like your mom, I have let Katie talk me

into this also like a mom, only for you, I, would I do this for, being your bitch and shit! She said, gathering my book bag, she smiled, then headed out the door to the car, she is articulate, solid, influential, argumentative, yet lovely words, and on like the girl she would become in the days to come - and she is my dearest, dearest friend. But then Katie can talk anyone into anything. Good luck she said handing me the re-right of my paper for class. She will make an exceptional journalist that I am not. Making notes, I am not the best at it at all, yet, I want to be someone someday, so pinning text and more of it.' Rising terror within me on a half-hour now late for first class.

'The questions will be racing in my mind, of what to say to cover my ass. Going now. It is a long drive- that I do not have to do- yet I do not want you to be late for what I do not need to live.' You are my lifesaver for editing I said.' 'Why do I put everyone ahead of myself, be so nice, try so hard and become the person that gets hurt the most? What can I do? I have gone through 8 or 9 years with no real friend no best friend nothing. just people who are assholes that I am stuck seeing every day, why? The most compassionate people in the world-the people who are truly kind, who are truly considerate-also have the best boundaries. If you do not have and assert personal boundaries, you will not feel respected or be compassionate towards people after a while.

That does not sound like it makes sense. But here is the thing: Compassion means seeing the best in others. It means empathizing- with their struggles and looking for what is good in them. To do that in a healthy way, you must be secure enough in yourself and your own identity that you do not lose your identity in theirs. If

you try to empathize without having good personal boundaries, you become the perfect victim- easy to manipulate, easy to control, easy to discard...’

~*~

What I see-

Tell the truth, everyone hates you.

Tell a lie and you do not have a support team.

Tell the truth, you will be forsaken.

Tell a lie, it is history in the making.

Have others there and its wishful thinking-

Having others in your life, and their hands is not worth shaking.

Live or lie we are all going to die so why try?

‘Yes,’ I croak and clear my throat. I roll my eyes at myself. Get a grip, I said. Judging from the building, which is too clinical and modern my apartment is all white elegant, ‘Yes.’ I take off my jacket?’ ‘Oh please, let it all stop.’ I struggled out of the jacket, knowing what to come more off him ran down and thought of me.

‘Merry! I thought you were not going to make it today, to all your classes- at school. You did not why?’ It did not take as long as I thought, to not have a- thought. I can do a couple of hours overtime to make up for it I said to my teacher that did not care either way.’

‘I’m pleased to see you, he said thought...’

When I arrive home later, Katie is wearing my headphones and working on my laptop, she is absorbed and typing furiously. I am thoroughly drained - exhausted by the long drive, I slump on to the couch after, thinking about the essay, I must finish and all the studying, I need to do just to suck, I have not done anything notable today, before it starts, because I was holed up with... he wants all of me and more, like a story that has not to be written.

I flush, and my heart rate inexplicably increases with him being with me always. ‘You have some good stuff here, Merry. Well, done. I cannot believe you did not take him up on his offer to show you around, more said the one girl that I got to do half of all my work- so really, I must do is keep him happy. He wanted to spend more time with you, that is why I am here, she said.’ She gives me a fleeting questioning look; says you go home with him now. That was not the reason, surely, I started her I thought, but okay?

He just wanted to show me around, the new home that he had redesigned just for you and your taste in color and style, I realize I am biting my lip, and that drives him crazy, and I hope Katie does not notice, this was her thing too. But she seems absorbed in her transcription, to do so. ‘Um... no, I didn’t, just do that for her with him think it was for her not him and maybe be it was just for her- wo-o-o.’ I flush up, to the thoughts of having 2 lovers running through my mind like a moon jet, in the sky going from mars to earth in less than a day.

‘Oh, come on, Marry - even you can’t be immune to his looks said Katie in my mind, I think she what to play with him using my mind also... ha and he loves it- it’s a 3 way in the brain- of two young girls and one older man that can’t do anything incorrectly.’ I lost in thoughts of thinking of her, and she arches a perfect, for me with her soft warm body showing in soft light, in her and ‘I’s’ room, also arching an eyebrow at me, as he is using me and my body as if she is me... you- and she is not me- but she is overriding me... and my movements. ‘I hear what you mean about formal sound, via you- she cute and young and what I want for fun. Did you take any notes on what I did here to make him ask for more?’ she asks.

‘That is fine, I said I well you mind to speech weighting, I know it is like- shorthand- and glitch-ie yet I can get the notes I need on pleasing him- to the most. And my readers for work... all at the same time, I can still make a fine article with these thoughts on how to be right for a guy like him. Shame we do not have some unique calms, of how a man can be with 2 -16- year-olds these days without think of marriage. Good-looking son of a bitch is not he, she said to me- blocking off his pathway in thought.’

‘I suppose he is I love you though- yet but this way we can all be to- gather and no one gets it- and even so, it is a story, and what well they say, why care? We are okay with this, why not the world.’ I try hard to sound disinterested- in only wanting one to love now and always, yet I cannot make up my mind to what I want, and I succeed at being a slut. ‘You probably would have got a lot more out of him, if you

would have to don't it like this- and she shows it in her thoughts to me- all sexy in her ways.'

'I doubt that Merry, Crappie! I said I distract her with flattery actions, always a good ploy, as I make her love me more, damn, she is inquisitive. Think of something - quick, to make them both feel what the need, 'So what did you think of him, my mother gets on this now and asked?' I have like five voices in my crazy head rolling around. - he practically offered you a job, yes, I said- saying GET OFF- GET ME OFF- SAID KATTIE over and over, and the old lady down stairs were calling the police officers! Katie just loooovesss my mom... She glances up at me speculatively. I make a hasty retreat into the kitchen to get to the wall screen to call and say there are no issues here not to come, that just us playing around. The girl officer looking now down on the whole run using the wall 4d tv screen that is cover, a fool to ceiling, was not impressed with us, to say the least- Come on Given that I foisted this on you at the last minute, you did very well.' This is an override of safety and privacy- they have the right to do this even if nude/ or having sex/ or shoring the cum off your body/ in your own home... it is to be safe, they can record video and sound when they feel the need for the law.

Kattie snorts, at the dumb of how this all went down. Why can't she just let this go, and go back to playing with herself, as they all do in their- indented force, of A-holes under their desks? What was that she said yah- sue me- she said, as the girl-ie cum runs down her leg as she yells get out of here, get out of my room, this is not right.

‘She is very driven, controlling, arrogant - scary having this girl- look all up and down me in her hologram inspection to see if we were okay or not, it is what they must do, to make sure you are not dying, they only send someone if you are already dead. I can understand the charm she is giving her for being in our room unwanted for an old ass that needs to kick,’ I add truthfully, as I peer ‘round the door of the bathroom, that I am now in, know that everything is seen through and or glass in this home like them all, hoping this will shut her up finally, saying we just having girl on girl sex- God, go be somewhere else. I scowl at the memory of this the last time it happened. Can the old bitch just freaking die as I feel I have said before many times, loudly? AWWWAH!

11

‘You, fascinated by a girl? He said at first when you were 12.’ I see first love...? I started gathering the making of a sandwich, I am his yet living- with her still, Incidentally, that was the most embarrassing question I have ever had too indoor. I was embarrassed, of all the slideshow of what we did as kids be shown for all to see at his workplace, saying I was the one... and he was pissed to be asked if I was a virgin.’

Yes, you can see the dildo fucking of them at 12, here in this clip said- the one man too eager- too eager. I would say so at 16 and into girls- one said, why here? That thought was the same in my mind also. Why Me...?

‘Whenever she’s was in the society pages, she never has a dated it said.’ ‘It was embarrassing nonetheless to see myself shown in that light and full color on the

big screen in the boardrooms of the school and at his workplace- no privacy for a girl like me. The whole thing was embarrassing. I am glad I will never have to lay eyes on him again.'

'Oh, Merry, it cannot have been that bad, she said holding me in my bed crying over it all. He sounds quite taken with you, she said- and so did mom- like I was a baby all over again.' Taken with me...? Now Katie's being ridiculous about this too. I cried... 'Would you like another sandwich?'

'Please...' For a moment, I hesitate, and I have Mom's full attention.

'I'm fine.' 'No, Mom, it is nothing. You will be the first to know if I do.'
'Merry, you need to get out more, honey. You worry me.' I curl up in my white iron bed, wrapping my mother's quilt around me, and the one she made for me too, I close my eyes, and I instantly fall asleep. That night I dream of dark places, lost in the time of the pass with her and her blue eyes looking into mine.

~*~

By Monday and by the time I finish, it is midnight now Tuesday, and- Katie has long since gone to bed. I made my way to my room, exhausted, but pleased that I've proficient so much for a. We talk no more of RICHARD C. MAST that always there - that evening, much to my relief, all the arguing was over. Once we have eaten, she and I just crashed for some time, I am able to sit at the dining table with Katie and, while she works on her article, I work on my essay for school for lit. Damn, I hate this with passion.

By Wednesday, she is much better, yet I am still in my PJs for Monday. For the rest of the week, I do even change them, or my sheets on the bed, why? I throw myself into my studies and my job of being whatever... however- whenever he wants it, however- whenever- why-ever and forever. I called my mom to check on her, for I was too mean, and so she could wish me luck for my final exams. She worries about me.

Katie is busy too, compiling the last edition of her student magazine, which I am sure no one will read. Drama- drama- drama. It is a brief- conversation with my mom before I want to rip my hair out. Later that evening, I call, my stepdad, that is dating a girl younger than me just to see if he has not been kill by a terrorist, yet he is dating her so... yah. It is Friday night, Katie and I are debating what to do with our evening- we want some time out from student newspapers, our studies, and from our work.

‘That is amazing - congratulations, Katie said reviewing it in her- mind!’

Delighted for him to be with her right, I hug him again in my mind and get off the line. Katie beams at him too, saying you could have had me. Why is it when I go out, I always feel trembly at the knees, heart-in-my mouth, butterflies in-my-belly, and come home with sleepless nights, yet even with her. Sometimes I wonder if there is something wrong with me. Do you think there is?

Why is he so interested in me, and not them it keeps going through my mind? I need more E-books- ‘Oh, you know, locked out of having too many. The

usual... well, have to do-The classics. Of US literature, primarily.’ He rubs my chin with his long index finger, but it is mine, and thumb as he contemplates my answer to more stories under his name on my E-reader. Or he is just very bored and trying to hide it when I am reading too long- or he likes that too about me. those fingers on that face are so enticing. ‘Anything else you need? Before I sign off...’ ‘I don’t know- um-like- you to be in my life.’ What else would you recommend?’ You must find out what you want.

He smirks, and then he raises an eyebrow, amused, yet again, for crying over a dumb story. He nods, with wicked humor, and amusement with me being me. I flush, and my eyes stray from the text. I reply softly, and I know I am no longer screening gazing, what is coming out of my mouth, is frustration. ‘You wouldn’t want to ruin your clothing, by not washing them.’ I gesture, ambiguously in the direction of the overstuffed washer- surging my shoulder’s.

‘I could always take them off- I said.’ ‘Cute’ what his thought...?

12

‘Um...’ I feel the color of pink in my cheeks increasing yet another time. I must be the color of the communist manifesto. Stop talking. Stop talking NOW. Heaven forbid I should ruin any clothing that you got for me,’ he says matter-of-factly. He ignores my inquiry of me rolling my eyes to that too. ‘How’s the article coming along?’ He knows yet still questions me with it.

I try and dismiss the unwelcome image of him without his underwear on.

I grasp it tightly with two hands like I was holding his, and I go for honesty, about my feelings. 'Do you need anything else?' He has finally asked me a normal question about us, and he starts doing cute things like only he can, the confusing of double talk... with Katie is a question I can answer, of the fact I love him now more than her.

-Raises an eyebrow, I investigate my mind to feel all of him.

'I am not writing it, Katie is, My roommate, she is the writer. She is incredibly happy with it. She is the editor of the magazine, and she was devastated that- she could not interview in person.' I feel like I have come up for air - at last, a normal topic of conversation. 'Her only concern is that she doesn't have any original photographs of you.'

'What sort of photographs does she want?'

Okay I said, I had not factored in this response. I shake my head because I just do not know how to say to her that I want her to back off, yet she is the one making me look to the world. Tomorrow, perhaps... I will come out and say it' he trails off the line.

Oversized photos and magazines- 'I well do more photoshoots naked for you.' My voice is squeaky- again, and I said yes for the world to see and for me to love you more. He said, Katie, will be in seventh heaven when she sees me like this if I can pull this off. And you might see him again tomorrow, that dark place at the base

of my brain whispers seductively at me. I dismiss the thought - of all the sill-illness, ridiculous... whys I going to be spared open on the screens for all to see my goodies.

‘Katie will be delighted if we can find a photographer, that wants a- successful conclusion as I do- ha with us all.’ I am so pleased, I smile at him broadly, with the outcome of all the shots. He has taken a sharp intake of breath, not remembering to let it out, for some time, and he blinks over and over to say she is all mine. For a fraction of a second, I was wondering what, and then it turned out to be sweet, he looks lost somehow, and the Earth shifts slightly on its axis, the tectonic plates sliding into a new position.

‘Let me know about tomorrow if you want to go around the world with- me.’ Reaching into his back pocket, he pulls out his wallet, and sees. ‘My card with his to do just that. It has my number on it, of getting out of the country, and back in... You will need to call before ten in the morning if you want to do this.’ ‘Okay.’ I grind at him. Katie is going to be thrilled, for me.

So, we did...

‘It was a pleasure to burn, burn all the words of the ones that, though- they knew it all-to make others feel the same, all that was known as wisdom... now the question shows in the people before me if they are wise or not.’

Like, I cannot tear my eyes away, for him all of him looking down then- back up, from his inquiry; and I gaze blindly, down at my tired fingers. I swallow too

hard... His mouth is very... distracting with those lips, hair, and eyes. It is just so right even if it is wrong.

‘I want to know about you... That is only fair.’ I lean forward to- retrieve the recorder it all the good stuff- for I was not hearing the words- lost in his charm- yet I must author the paper. He places his elbow on the arms of the chair, with his fingers in front of his mouth rubbing his lower lip, as if it were mine. I knew his thoughts, at the time, were all about impressing me. I curl up in my white iron bed, wrapping my mother's quilt around me, close my eyes, and I am instantly asleep. That night I dream of dark places, bleak white cold floors, and gray eyes.

~*~

For the rest of the week, I throw myself into my studies and my job. Katie is busy too, compiling the last edition of her student magazine before she must relinquish it to the new editor while also cramming for her finals. By Wednesday, she is much better, and I no longer must endure the sight of her pink-flannel-with-too-many-rabbits PJs.

I called my mom to check on her, but also so she can wish me luck for- my final exams. She proceeds to tell me about her latest venture into candle- making - my mother is all about new business ventures. Fundamentally she is bored and wants something to occupy her time, but she has the attention span of a goldfish. It will be something new next week. She worries me, and I worry about her you see. ‘How are things with you, Merry?’

One week has passed, and I am sitting in his office. For a moment, I hesitate, and I have his full attention, lost in his eyes. 'I'm fine I said.' 'Have you met someone, a man I mean?' Why do you ask? Wow... I thought... red rushing feeling coming up my neck. How does she do that the excitement in her voice is palpable? I have a crush on the boss, 'really my mom said- a boy?' 'Mom, it's nothing really- just some hot-shot.' 'Like- you will be the first to know, like- if I do- more then I should.' Why sex already? NO! I just encountered this man, I not going to be all hot and heavy already... 'Make baby's she said...' I want to shit myself!

Why does he have such an unnerving effect on me I asked my Ma?

His- overwhelming good-looks the way his eyes blaze at me. The way he strokes his index finger against his lower lip, I wish he would stop doing that. My heart is pounding. The elevator arrives on the first floor, and I scramble out as soon as the doors slide open, stumbling once, but fortunately not sprawling on to the immaculate sandstone floor. I race for the wide glass doors, and I am free in the bracing, cleansing, damp air of New York. Raising my face, I welcome the cool refreshing rain. I close my eyes and take a deep, purifying breath, trying to recover what is left of my equilibrium.

'You sound like a control freak.' The words are out of my mouth- before I can stop them. 'Oh, I exercise control in all things, Miss,' he says without a trace of humor in his smile. I look at him, and he holds my gaze steadily, impassive. My

heartbeat quickens, and my face flushes again. 'Do you feel that you have immense power?' Control Freak.

'Oh. I will bear that in mind,' I murmur, completely confounded, that she thinks I am good enough. 'Though I'm not sure I'd fit in with his type I said.' Oh no, not at all like what I see him with, I am musing aloud again. 'Would you like me to show you around?' He asks me this... 'I'm sure you're far too busy, RICHARD C. MAST- Mr. Morgan, and I do have a long drive.' 'You're driving back in a week?' she sounds surprised, anxious even that I may have hooked this man- in the least. I glance out of the window, running the day and him in my mind.

It has begun to rain hard. 'Well, you'd better drive carefully.' His tone is- stern, authoritative. Why should he care?' Did you get everything you need?' He adds... I remember his saying that 'The pleasures have been all his well it was all mine- nothing but pleasure,' he is so polite as ever, to me makes me feel good about me being, a loser, and a freak in every way that sucks like a girl. I drop my phone into my school bag and call it a night. My eyes narrow, on the paper, I had to write.

'Thank you for the interview, RICHARD C. MAST Morgan was not a good ending to- me; yet me saying, I had one that was happy was not good either.' Crap...! As I rise and stands and holds out his hand to my teacher that was a dick about the fact I could write. Here is your paper I said... the man was lackluster about my attempts at wooing him.

‘Do you want the FREAK-ing thing or not- because- like Katie, I could- be home now- play with it! The whole class knew that this girl had- an oversexed issue of Doing the two-finger salute non-stop in class, so there are busting out... about it being okay for her and not me- they all know what happened its showing on the walls. ‘Yes- if you feel that I need to see it...’ ‘Like- that’s why I did it- dick-suck!’ I did not say it out loud- yet it was heard in his mind to his... and theirs.’ ‘Just ensuring you make it through the door, Miss to blush and feel like complete crap.’ He gives me a small smile, saying decent work here. Thanks, I say running for freedom! He is referring to my love life, more than the paper, as I run for the office. I flush up... with all of them chasing behind me, playing freak you hard in the brain it is a game to them of back and forth.

~*~

“Tell the moment I see you once more Miss.’ You are- testing me, here...or a threat, I am not sure which what it is- yet. I frowned slightly. When will we ever meet again, it was asked, so-o I shake his hand once more like before, I was surprised that the strange current among us is still there? It must be my nerves, I said and felt. ‘RICHARD C. MAST I said thanks for your time.’ I nodded at him. Moving with nimble sporty elegance to the door, he opens it wide for me to walk through. ‘Did you have a coat?’ He asked, and the moment passed too slow yet too fast.

‘That’s so nice of you do that, him- the- RICHARD C. MAST- this man I am lusting- for,’ I snap, in my moment, and his smile widens at me. I am glad you find

me pleasurable, that is my joy in life having and give just that, I look angrily inwardly, walking into the entrance hall. I am astonished when he follows me out, asking for more time with me another time. I- Marry and then Olivia we both look up, likewise taken back by him asking for a date night.

‘Yes.’ Olivia leaps up and retrieves my jacket, which - takes from her- before she can hand it to me. He holds it up and, feeling ridiculous- self-conscious, I shrug it on. They are not all that much here for you to know about, or for me to say you need to know, I find myself flushing up yet again with him looking at me the way he does.

‘What are your plans after you graduate? You do not remember? I questioned, no I just wanted to see if you are disciplined as I with saying- repartition- in your speeches.’ I hope to find work with someone like you have a man that is like you, and life and some city where I can start anew, like New York. That is if I pass all my classes and get out of the school, yet this is my final that is holding me back to getaway.

I have not made any plans- I thought about quitting, yet my mother- would not hear of it, so I am here, and Kite is doing what I want to be right now. ‘Gross!’ So, in saying all of that I conclude that you have not made any? Right, I said shakenly... I just need to get through my final exams if I can, yet you have the say in this. ‘Why do you say that...?’ I see that he turns his head to the one side, fascinated, a hint of a faint smile playing on his lips. I hope that he did not notice my reaction, he gives nothing

away, with the look that he is giving me. 'It's obvious, isn't it- that I have fallen to his charms?' I am clumsy, unkempt, and I am not blonde, not his type at all.

~*~

He places his hands for a moment on my lower backside. I gasp at his- soft touch, his long index finger presses the button summoning the elevator, and we stand to wait - awkwardly on my part, coolly self-possessed on his.

The doors opened, and I hurried desperately to escape. I need to get out of here. When I turn to look at him, he is leaning against the doorway beside the elevator with one hand on the wall. He is particularly good looking. It is distracting. His burning gray eyes gaze at me. 'Merry,' he says as a farewell. 'Chiaz,' I reply. And mercifully, the doors close. No man has ever affected me the way Chiaz has, and I cannot fathom why. Is it his looks that he gives me, that I feel this power over me that I cannot control His Wealth also blows my mind, the power I do not understand my unreasonable reaction? I breathe an enormous sigh of relief. What in heaven's name was that all about... Leaning against one of the stone pillars of the building, I intrepidly try to calm down and gather my thoughts. I shake my head. Holy crap, I said - what was that...? My heart steadies to its regular rhythm, and I can breathe normally again. I head for the car.

He may be conceited- I am falling to it, but then he has a right to be- he is skillful so-o much at such an undeveloped time of life. He does not agonize boobs

gladly, but why should he, o'er, I am irritated that Katie did not give me a brief profile on all this- shity – stuff like always.

An involuntary shiver runs down my spine. And Katie's questions are rushing through my head or did you or did not you have hookup sex, it was not about getting the job- oh now in today's light it is all about the sex and the money to buy anything or anyone. - ugh, I said to her- well you saw it play out did not you know it happened!

He kept my underwear- I know she said... sweet...! I shudder in the remembering swallowing him sucking him off and that too I showed and then galloped, then it ended with him kissing my body all over softly. I cannot believe I said that to her, yet she saw it sliding in me too- they all did, with this new type of video calling we have- you can see through others... like being there without being there. As I leave the city limits behind, the building behind, and move pasted I begin to feel foolish and embarrassed as I replay the interview in my mind. Surely, I am overreacting to something imaginary.

Okay, so he is extremely attractive, confident, commanding, at ease with himself - but on the other side, he is arrogant, and for all his impeccable manners, he is autocratic and cold. Well, on the surface.

While cruising along down the highway, my mind continues to ponder the facts of what I have done slow long hard, and yet slow, THE FREAKING WAS INSPIRITY. LIP BITING, BOOB GRABBING, NIPPLE AND SUCKING CLIT

LICKING SEX, AND FOREPLAY- DEPE FINGERING LOVE'N SEX.
POUNDING! SWEETING- OMG MOMENTS OF GOING OFF OVER AND OVER,
WITH HIM UNDER ME! YOU CAN SEE me AND THE SHOT IN YOUR MIND
RIDING HIM FROM WITH MY BUT GOING UP AND DOWN- SLIDING-
GLADDING- FEELING ME IN- COMPLETELY! AH! HE IS EVERYTHING I
NEED TO MAKE IT IN THIS LIFE- I WANT IT EVEN IF I HURT THE FIRST
TIME! 'The sun burnt every day.

Yet it burnt away like with old ways and time. I looked up to the skies and
thought about the ways of life.'

Truly puzzled by all that went down in me, I need this feeling and feelings
to succeed in this life as a woman. A woman is nothing without her man- a man that so
perfect as he is... under her. Some of his replies were so obscure, yet I loved the
mystery of it all - as if he had a hidden agenda. me up now! Consistently I think of that
inquiry in the future, I will cringe with blushing.

Damn Katie, for not wanting me- now I must want him always!

Did I question my racing thoughts- like have you ever watched the jet cars
race on the boulevard? They now drive themselves crazy to think that some used to do
just that drive by hand. I sometimes think drivers do not know what grass is, or
flowers, because they never-ever see them gradually... If you showed a driver a blue
blur, Oh affirmatively! A blur flashing before my eyes like him naked in my mind-
and Katie spared eagle last night in my face wanting me to go down- that butt is

unforgettable! What can you do, all girls today are Bi? Right? It is all part of not being wed... and even so that just a piece of paper stating someone owns you, and you lose have of what you worked for- so why do it?

I check the speedometer and see 300 mph. I am driving more cautiously than I would on any other occasion.

-And-

I know it is the memory of two penetrating it is his eyes gazing soft and sweet at me his nude body ribbing over mine, and his stern voice telling me to FREAK him, harder and harder, I want to... as the car is driving carefully fast around all the others whizzing by. Pulling at my hearing and biting my lip I go off c*mming, in just the thoughts, I realize that he is more like a man double his age, as my daddy- yet I want the challenging work out of a FREAK! Squeezed tight, body and me holding him in me... and the spraying finally takes places over and over like 30 times, switching ways of doing it- up down and sideways and more. He came in me to not pulling out one's... is that love or not caring, I do not have to care to evert there is stopped, so I do not have to worry?

Freak and be freaked is the game of life... and do not think about it! Freaked under over and above that is it how I do it person- and they love me for it... and make you be someone... that advice to live by... said, Katie. I was 10 when I found that girl- like you all virgin and shy... how did you get as far as you did, she said that a week ago back, well, she was right... I did need to go a little crazy... yet I

may have fallen in love with it... and that not how a thing works today either. Yet that is just me- old fashioned thinking.

Be unable to remember everything blacking out in the heated moments of sex... Merry, I scold myself... snapping out of it, I decided that overall, it has been a remarkably interesting experience, but I should not abide by it. Put it behind you. I never have to see him again. I am immediately cheered by the thought. I switch on the small ear head and player and turn the volume up loud blasting pop music, I sit back in the car as it races for my apartment where I have to then take the trail that winds up the side of the skyscraper- leading up to my room or that floor, and listen to thumping music, as I make my lover parts do the same- think about him well doing myself, as I press down on the accelerator to my sleeping room, was Kittie is looking for to cuddling with me- she and I share a bed it all we can adore- making less than a dollar a day- and need 100 just to live.

As I hit 1-5, I realize I can drive as fast as I want.

We live in a small community of duplex apartments in Vancouver, Washington, close to the NYU campus. I am fluky - Katie's parents bought the place for her, and I pay peanuts for rent. It has been home for four years now. As I pull up outside, I know Katie is going to want a blow-by-blow account, and she is tenacious. Well, at least she has the mini-disc. Hopefully, I will not have to elaborate much beyond what was said during the interview.

‘Merry! You are back.’ Katie sits in our and you are with me cheaters- you said- to I said- yes but all that? Why not? I see... okay, she said, surrounded the movie she was crying over not having me there for her to feel loved. She loves me yet she does not want to be in love with me- I wonder why? She has been studying for finals - though she is still in her pink flannel pajamas decorated with cute little bunnies, that were mine, the ones she reserves for the aftermath of breaking up with her, for not want girl on girl sex as much as she wanted it, and for general moody depression of being- bitchy. She bounds me up and hugs me hard and slides them off asking me to do what I did with him on her.

To lick and stick... and feel and play with her vulva, squeeze me and- play with my nipples... she said- well she was ou-yah-ing- as I was giving her there in oral, looking for to having it back.’ I was beginning to worry, that he was looking into my mind and seeing this... and me doing just this with her... am- I do not wrong? I expected you back sooner, she said grunting it out of her, every drop was a trusting spray of her feel whipped out yet happy with everything down there.’ thank you so much for doing this, I said to her, have it cum, yet not feel like I did in the past. I owe you; I know.

‘How was it.’

‘Good...’ I said- ‘What was he like?’ Oh, you did not feel inside you where you were looking down over me without asking to be there... you are not my girl... you do not need to be here... I know you got off with us... why?

Do you want me?

Yes!

Now and always- she said.

I want him now, not you... do not blow it for me... I struggle to answer-

her question, of what I wanted, can I have both... I thought she giggled... see therefore I love you. What can I say? I will always be here for you- like this- yes like this I said- you are such a baby I must be. Young, to be doing that with a man... 'I no...' Katie gazes at me arched eyebrows looking sad. I frown at her, saying you are always my first love. Hug me... 'I am glad it is over, and I do not have to see him again, I must, to make it in this life... wink. He was intimidating, you know.' I shrug at the thoughts of want more... of both in a loving way 'He's extremely focused, intense even - and young... a boy... yet not you at all as I feel I have said in my dreams and now alike- but I will go there. I thought you did it all great... interview and such all also, in the end, it was about you have a 10-figure job someday. And you will have it, BUT would you give that all up for me and have 'nothing' but for me- and be with me? That is the question I have for you- do you love me?

13

(Forward)

Note- look for the name- Marry and make for there are 2r's- 'Merry, hi, it's so good to see you, back she said- that being Katie!'

She grins as he examines me at arm's length. Then he releases me but keeps a possessive arm draped over my shoulder. I shuffle from foot to foot, embarrassed by what I have done. She gushes with loving hugs. So how was it? I to pooped to say... and she passed out in her arms- falling in the doorways- that sild opens for her. 'Yep, you're looking well, Merry, really well- I see the glow in your face of what all that you two did.'

I can hardly breathe. When I glance up at RICHARD C. MAST -, he is watching us like a warmonger, his blue eyes hooded and speculative, his mouth a hard-impassive line. Hurriedly, I place his purchases in a plastic carrier. Someone you should meet,' I say, trying to defuse the antagonism I see in-'s eyes. He is changed from the weirdly attentive customer to someone else- someone cold and distant. The atmosphere is suddenly chilly, and the fire hot, glowing and shining on her skin... she is truly feeling loved- and in love with him and her too. I nod, rendered speechless yet again, and handed back his credit card, if he loves me then I well spend- spend- spend!

There, I have admitted to myself, I love him for the money I get and feel good, about him making me feel good.' Good. Until tomorrow perhaps where I will be long for her yet once more- right?' He turns to leave, then pauses, asking me for more of what he loves of me the most, 'your ass' said Katie- 'No my Puss!' I said back. his coming here, tonight to see me- so you need to- well 'get lost' yes... if you do not mind.

'Fine...'

‘Oh, and Marry Sue I just want to freak you, I read of the card to the flowers he got me- cute Katie said... reading it to using my eyes, yet her thoughts. But it is a lost cause, I have fallen to his ways, I know, and I sighed hard, with nostalgic regret, it was just a coincidence, she smiles looking at me say it all it must be young love, Okay- I like him like- like...? Closing the door by asking it to do just that, I spend several minutes staring into space, I cannot hide from myself my feelings anymore.

(Home)

Katie is ecstatic after she does it yourself time... ‘DIY baby D-I-Y!’

I bite my lip in anticipation and find myself grinning like a schoolchild, at the looks of her playing, her curiosity oozes through me too, with what she- was just 2. 0 is what. (BUTT plug) I have never felt like this before, where I just need sleep. She more then I and she stayed home all week, yet have so much to do- papers, and stocking shelves, I find him attractive lost in my thoughts in my awareness, extremely attractive... M-mm-mm I said, softly, I can admire him from in here and it safe, surely? No harm, by doing just so-o. And if I find a photographer, I can do some serious admiring tomorrow. I need to phone Katie and organize a photo-shoot.

(Work)

I am in the depths of the stock room, I walk out holding what the little girl gave me of hers to get the same type, yes, getting underwear to little- girls, is my dream job, trying to keep my voice casual- well look at these sweet little faces

standing there, well standing there... (pee covered undies in my hands) with this in my butt hole. I thought this is what she must look forward to. 'That is one huge coincidence, Merry, he said looking for the size as I say OOOO-ah 'poop-ie.' And the little girl asked, from afar- what I was making out my myself- when too much time had passed. it is a short-lived joy when she was blurting out, I want the underwire that you took off me. I mutter you want kids...

'Sure...'

Like this one, he said... being comical about it.

He does not I want to wish you, Katie said- saying kidnap this one!

PLEASE- too cute...!

14

You do not think he was there to see you; I walk down the hall of my school and see him standing at the end looking at me with his lusting blue eyes, wanting to cover me with kisses.' she speculates, Katie about how he going to take me away... even as just a schoolgirl- 'How do you know this?' 'Merry, I am a journalist, and I have written a profile on the guy. I know that man has the power of girls to do whatever it is they want too... the kids were talking about us... me being young and his little slut as they call me, yet I do not care I have him- isn't that all I need?

The question is, who is here to see some dumb girls were thinking in the dark, think they could be the next in his bed, going to do them and where and when.'

‘We could ask him why- and where and how but would he say said on-brown-haired girl, over yonder. He says he is staying the day with- ‘THAT GIRL.’’
‘You can contact him, all the time? ...On nose on said to me.’ ‘I have his wrist phone number here all the time if I need it, they don’t get how he inside me always.’

Katie gasps... by the lies I must make up to look innocent to all, even-though I know, I have taken it at least 1,000 times, holy c-u-m, at the end of my joiner year.

‘The richest, most elusive, I have taken was sex-ed, with this man as an after-school program, most here are working for what he calls righting class, most enigmatic unmarried person, or hairstyles, or seen to be housewife’s ‘Er... yes.’
‘Merry is not going to be one of those! He likes you, said the short girl in the room, no doubt about it, said the other with long blond-haired person flowing hair and green eyes.’ Her tone is emphatic when he said let us go on the town and get you out of here.
‘Katie, he’s just trying to be nice.’ But she was pouting about it, that I was not going to be there all day to hold her hand. ‘Great idea! I spoke.

(A thought of now), he did say he was glad Katie did not do the interview, that we would have never met.

(Thought)

But even as I say the words, I love you I must feel it right?

That the sex said Katie, and you will know. I know they are not true- all the nasty things said by all the mean girls- RICHARD C. MAST- does not do nice, or wonderful thing for girls,' like me- things like this if it is not love- fist.

(Back)

And a small quiet voice whispers saying they all just want to be for you are the best one out of them all do not forget it, he is right. I hug myself with quiet glee, rocking from side to side, holding him in my mind, like a dream, I see all this... entertaining the possibility that he might like me for one brief moment- for always. Katie brings me back to the now and happening by saying your zipper is down... (zip) and her hands are on my pussy.

'Merry, you are the one with the relationship. What is it like to be with a boy said the girl lunch? That sits with her day in and day out not saying much.' 'Relationship?' I squeak at her, my voice rising several octaves.' I barely know the guy.' Yet it is something you just must do to get it. So, is it true? What I said to her... you are with him... and do things... 'Yeah, um, sorry,' I mutter, turning to leave. I cannot say- what we do or do not do- it is confidential.

'So, how come you know: The RICHARD C. MAST?' Cass's voice is unconvincingly nonchalant and wants to know it all.

This is when Katie speaks up saying everything and anything- along with saying she needs to get laid- I give an odd look- when she said- 'I had to interview him for our student newspaper today and I said- 'you did the editing.' So, you can

move forward, Katie was not well- she all is dripping from somewhere ha.’ I shrug my shoulder, trying to sound casual with all the girls looking at me like I am a whore, yet not doing no- better than them- in their twisted little minds. She shakes her head as if to clear it all away.’ Anyway, want to grab a drink or something and chat some over there?’ away from this gossip? ‘Sure...’ is what I said. I am staring out of the window at the sun coming up and showing the first signs of light. Katie grabs the handset from me, tossing her silky-smooth red-blonde hair over her shoulder.

You like him, a chant started with all the girls! I have never seen or heard so, so... many girls care- about anyone before. You are blushing.’ Said Katie... ‘Oh Katie, you know I blush all the time, I said quickly... She blinks over and over fast, at me with surprise that I did not move or reacted to this taunting. ‘I just find him... intimidating, that’s all, and he’s acting cool for me right now- or I am sure, I would have run out.’

I love you is what he said over and over... overtop all the haters.

(Home from school)

I am restless that night, I punch my pillow and try to settle, tossing and turning, after a short cat nap, yet I wake twice. Dreaming of him and those-eyes and oh...! That body, long legs, long fingers, and dark hair and soft skin..., ‘I need to study, then I’ll make supper.’ I cannot hide my irritation with her for going too far with him, as I open one of the cubbyholes under our bed, I read a love note of dream

of him, I do this while she is making supper. In the night- holding her, my heart pounding, knowing what is going on two girls on man- who does he love more?

15

Nine- free of charge for the morning in exchange for a credit in the article, said Katie, I do this for the love by you. When she explains at the reception that I have forgone writing yet bad spelling, she said to-RICHARD C. MAST - RICHARD C. MAST, we are instantly upgraded have her on our time- yes? She is terribly young and extremely nervous for some reason, yet if you want to have this way then if he said, it is fine.

We have half an hour to set up, for the day out, Katie is in full flow, working on her work and not going to school... funny how life works...? I thought... 5 P. M.

My mouth goes dry looking at him... he is so freaking hot. Holy Crap He is wearing a white shirt, open at the collar, and - dress pants, I disruptive hair is still damp from a shower, for what took place after the school day was at its end. His eyes watch me impassively. He then extends his hand, 'Thank you for taking the time to do this.' ...and I shake it like I am one of his men on the job, blinking rapidly, to see if anyone see us out and bout, Oh my... I thought, he really is, quite... is he liking her more now- wow?

As I touch his hand, I am aware of that delicious current running right through me, lighting me up, making me blush, and I am sure my erratic breathing must

be audible. Katie who comes forward, looking him squarely in the eye, said I am coming on this date tonight. How do you do?' He said- to her kissing her hand and her ass all at the same damn time... He gives her a small smile, looking genuinely amused, as to what was under the dress.

I remind myself that Katie has been to the best private schools. 'I trust you're feeling better?' 'Yes, yes I do...' 'I am fine, also running it into his head fist that he ALL MINE! She shakes his hand firmly, AND HE HUGES HER NOT ME! SHIT! without batting an eyelid, HOLD ON TO HIS ARM.

Backstory- Her family has like no money, and she is grown up- confident, about her ass and how to use it at an early age, and I am sure of her place in the world- is sitting at home diddling no more. She does not take any crap, so why him? I am in awe of her, for trying to break us up, so-o she has all of me back- I can see through her plans. She gives him a polite, professional smile like a gay girl would.

'It's a pleasure,' he answers, that is all it is about with me and find it, turning his gaze on me, and I flush up again, feeling lovesick, damn it why when I have this, I feel I going to lose it...? 'Where would you like me?' - Asks him. His tone sounds vaguely threatening. But Katie is not about to let me run the show for five. My wish has come true: she said, I can stand next to you, and admire you and not - from not-so-afar. Twice of my eyes lock deeper into her, and I must tear myself away from his cloudy gaze, of wanting to freak the shit out of her.

(Bar)

'He stands, Katie wades in again. 'Enough sitting.' I removed the chair, for some slow dancing. 'Great,' says Katie, I find a bonnier to bang down- when a fast song comes on... 'Thank you again, Mr. for your time. He said- 'I look forward to reading the article that you re-told, Miss Katie,' he murmurs in a sexy way. As I-Merry- pull him to dance. 'Sure,' I say, completely thrown, yet I do not need him doing the same. I glance anxiously at Katie, who shrugs at me. Yelling has fun, as she finds her way over to the wall to be a flower. My heart slams, my mouth dry and my lower-ness not so-o much.

Yet am I in love?

-Or is it all just dumb freaking lust, or just freaking?

16

A date? RICHARD C. MAST - is asking me on a date tonight I said to my girlfriend Katie. He is asking if you want a coffee, this was said to me I see it in my memory for the day that just passed. He thinks you have not woken up yet- to see that it was all not a dream that he is falling for her, my subconscious whines at me in sneering in my mood again. I clear my throat trying to control my nerves, yet I cannot.

Katie- this man said- 'Are they based at the university?' Know I live with her- he looked at me oddly, about saying that. The other couple with us- asked, their names escape' me, yet I could dig it up if I wanted to, his voice was soft, a young businessperson that was part of the team higher up and inquiring. I nod, too stunned to

Speak, Peter was his name, I found the clip to look over it and think about all the things that were said so fast I could not evoke them all.

‘Mr. Peter, as he asks me if I want a drink- sure is what I said, and a dace and I said- ‘yes,’ but my mind was on him- yet this man reached for me, and I have to say yes I was obligated, giving nothing away, about how I feel. I look at him like there was magic in my eyes yet there was not. But he was sweet so... yah.

He smiles at me, and it is a dazzling one, unguarded he said to me, I- said Nah drop out- natural he said, all-teeth-showing, glorious smile, of college? No high school... Oh my... he said. I scoot around him to enter the bathroom, where I find Marry deep discussion with him- they were in a stall together getting it on.

‘Merry, he likes you, I said as the pants were at their feet.’ Be sure to wear a condom- ha you can go now- she said fast. ‘But I don’t trust him, you know that’ she adds. I raise my hand in the hope, it hits her in the face, that she will stop dirty talking. By some miracle, it does. Her mouth pops open and it slides in. Speechless Katie is! I savored the moment, seeing I was so happy for her. I love her, yet I want her to be happy you see.

(160 long seconds have passed)

She purses her lips as if considering my request. Finally, she fishes for him. She grabs me by my arm, holding the door open some say get in here, be with him too now, and drags me into the bedroom where it goes down fixed, that is off the living area of the suite, in this nice bar in New York.

Her tone is full of warning.

At the elevators, he presses the call button, and the bell rings almost immediately. The doors slide open revealing a young couple in a passionate clinch inside.

Merry- there is something about him, that is just driving me crazy- lost in thoughts... and feelings- of what could be. 'He is gorgeous, I agree, but he is dangerous. Especially to someone like you. She said...' 'What do you mean, someone like me?' I demand, affronted. 'An innocent like you, Merry.

You know what I mean,' she says a little maddened.

I flush up turning pink. I am starting my exams this week, and I need to study, so I will not be long- it is time to go 'like now' I said hurriedly.' Fixing up as a young girl walks in, asking if everything was cool.

17

'Katie- it is just coffee, I said to Merry- he said- I want to take you out what do you say he said to me. And... he looked at me with wonder...

He grins at me with hope in the eyes of a night that he would not forget all given by me I sure, and with his money, I was sure to do whatever he wanted. It is now tomorrow and at night- 'I will see you later, then... yes most defiantly. Do not belong, I said to her... or I will send out search and rescue.' 'Thanks.' I hug her, I with

your boys so you know him he will be right to me... I was so pissed, why her... yet is that okay?

He stands up straight, holding his hand out for me to go first, were had a date with a horse drawing carriage, all white, and nice and romantic at dusk. Where he held my hand and whispered sweet nothings in my ear. Holding me over so nicely... I flushed beet red. 'Okay, let us do coffee, here and it was the best restart in town... and the classiest- the name in French so yah see for yourself.' By my eyes it was Queue-weed I said yet that was without glasses on. That was something a failure like- in high-school.

I emerge from the suite to find RICHARD C. MAST - waiting, leaning up against the wall, looking like a male model in a pose for some glossy high-end magazine.

Merry- after being with him all do, I am pooped, I murmur I make my- way down the corridor, my knees shaky, my stomach full of butterflies, and my heart in my mouth thumping a dramatic uneven beat. I am going to have coffee with RICHARD C. MAST, and I hate coffee... but- she ran off with my man!

'Sucking tit shit!' I spoke!

We walk together down the wide hotel corridor to the elevators.

What should I say to him? My mind is suddenly paralyzed with apprehension. What are we going to talk about? What on Earth do I have in common with him?

His soft, warm voice startles me from my reverie. I REMEMBER BACK-OF The doors opening and, much to my surprise, - takes my hand, clasping it with his long cool fingers. I feel the current running through me, and my already rapid heartbeat hurries. As he leads me out of the elevator kissing my neck and lips softly, we can hear the suppressed giggles of the couple erupting behind us. - grins from all around, yet we did not care it was lusting love.

‘How long have you known Marry - Katie Oh, an easy question for-starters... I thought... ‘Since our 1st year of schooling. She is a good friend of mine, do not break her heart.’ Why do not say anything but look at this- wow?

I am struggling to maintain a straight face, so I gaze down at the floor, feeling my cheeks turning pink. Surprised and embarrassed, by the fact I thought it was for me I was like shit, I started to feel guilty. Then, I step into the elevator, feeling like I want to be her.

‘What is it about elevators?’ he mutters, thoughts of true love... about her.

When I peek up at them using my mind phone to see into their thoughts - through my lashes and their eyes, he has a hint of a smile on his lips of what he plans to give me, but it is extremely hard to tell if he is being real about it.

As a young couple, I say nothing, and have nothing in that say anyway- and we travel down to the first floor, all in the same body's- me as Katie is embarrassed silence-less for she in me full.

Katie- Outside, it is a mild May on a Sunday. The sun is shining, and the traffic is light. - turn left and stroll to the corner, where we stop waiting for the lights at the pedestrian crossing to change. He is still holding my hand. I am in the street, and RICHARD C. MAST - is holding my hand. We cross the expansive, bustling lobby of the hotel toward the entrance but - avoids the revolving door, and I wonder if that is because he would have to let go of my hand.

I attempt to smother the ridiculous grin that threatens to split my face in two. I feel giddy, and I tingle all over... for the good buy sex, yet we wanted each other- badly- no one has ever held my hand. Try to be cool, Merry, my subconscious implores me. The green man appears, and we are off again.

'I'll have... um - Breakfast W/ tea, bag out, talking about all that to over the fact he was to spend his life with her as me being his sideways bitch out the side and you know what I'm okay with that.' He raises his eyebrows.

'Why do not you choose a table, while I get the drinks. What would you like?' he asks, polite as ever. We walk four blocks before we reach the NY Coffee House, where - releases me to hold the door open so I can step inside. 'The coffee was good? Cram-ie like I was for him... at midnight.' 'I'm not keen on coffee, yet I like this.'

His smiles- OH MY GOD! For a moment, I am stunned, thinking it is a blandishment, but fortunately my unconscious kicks in with pursed lips. As I lay naked on his bed in the hotel room that he owns- I stare down at my knotted fingers, think about how I the other girl.

‘Anything to eat?’ I surreptitiously gaze at him from beneath, and my lashes point upward at him as he stands there looking down at me with low light on and the skyline in the background flicking lights, of tall buildings, I could watch him all, think about how I was not sleep with her tonight.

‘Sure...?’

‘... It was quite in my mind because...’

I bite my lip and stare down at my hands again not liking where my wayward thoughts are headed. ‘No thank you.’ I shake my head to see him coming at me, and he heads for me.

Do I want this I thought? Oh, my hips, once or twice he runs his long, graceful fingers through, he is tall, broad-shouldered, and slim those pants hang from his ankles...

and the way his now dry but still disorderly hair, sheens in the light is so right, I am just oozing for his love. So, yah wet-Hmm... I would like to do that to you he said- and my mouth doped for it. The thought comes unbidden into my mind and my face flames.

‘Penny for your thoughts, dollars for hardcore freaking?’ Yes, sign me up...!

For his love...! I go crimson when the hood is pulled back by his fingers. Flaking and liking- and then sticking- ‘OH MY GOD -Freak-ING- YES!!’

‘Get down with your bad self!’

I spoke! In my thoughts... running my fingers through your hair, his going down in me, I was just thinking about and wondering if it would feel soft to touch like this always, I shake my head from the c*mming hard, and being fast, and faster yet, and over and over. my favorite part- and part of the day, I said to him- letting out a big breath.

(Moring)

I curl up, desperately clutching the flat foil balloon and Peter’s handkerchief, and surrender myself to my grief. I fall onto my bed, shoes and- all, and howl. The pain is indescribable... physical, mental... metaphysical... it is everywhere, seeping into the marrow of my bones. Grief. This is grief - and I have brought it on myself. Deep down, a nasty, unbidden thought comes from my inner goddess, her lip curled in a snarl... the physical pain from the bite of a belt is nothing, nothing compared to this devastation. How do they do that?

The room is so nice, all fancy, he is carrying a platter, which he sets down on the small, round, birch-veneer table. He hands me a cup and saucer, a small teapot, and a side plate bearing alone teabag labeled Breakfast.'

-He has a coffee that bears a wonderful leaf-pattern engraved in milk.

I wonder idly in my mind for some time. 'Your thoughts on all this?' He prompts me when I look into his eyes. He is also bought himself a blueberry muffin, with lots of sugar on top.

Putting the tray aside, to kiss me all over even if it was all sticky like the hammer on an Underwood typewriter, he sits opposite me and crosses his long legs. Cover between my legs with soft sweet kissing, He looks so comfortable, up at me, so at ease with his body, I envy him, for I am not like that at all.

Here is me, all gawky and awkward, barely able to get started to end without falling flat on my face- 'I am selfish, impatient and a little insecure. I make mistakes, I am out of control and at times hard to handle. But if you cannot handle me at my worst, then you do not deserve me at my best.'

As I place the used teabag back on the side plate, he turns his head gazing enquiringly at me, with the look of hunger and thriving lust. 'This is my favorite tea; how did you know I loved this so?' My voice is quiet, wheezy.

I simply cannot believe I am sitting opposite RICHARD C. MAST - in a coffee shop in NY. He frowns, some not too much you... it shows on his face the lines, he knows I am hiding something, and that is what I am falling for him.

I pop the teabag into the teapot and proximately fish it out again with my teaspoon.

18

'I like my tea black, and weak,' I mutter some- to him running my fingers through his her like we were longtime lovers, then he said- 'I see, she is your little girlfriend then, that you in-love with -Now and forever?'

I said- 'You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because the reality is in conclusion better than your dreams.'

She is a really- good friend of mine, that is all, and we have shared a lot.

Why did you think he was my girlfriend? Now and forever.' 'She's more like family,' I whisper, holding his body tightly with mine. A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you- love them if you want to?

Right... it is just showing caring...?

Then the nods from him are slightly neat looking, all him, satisfied with my response, and glances down at his blueberry muffin.

His long fingers deftly peel back the paper- and I watch, fascinated, looking at his dick.

As he is me... all over the eye are going. Spellbound, 'The way you smiled at him, is wonderful my girlfriend Jan said... looking into it, with her nose up my butt looking into the walls- TVs, and I heat you.'

His leaden gaze holds mine. I want to look away, but I am caught- him doing things I like with his butt, he is so alarming, yet everything I need.

I frown and stare down at my hands again, laying on the bed, recessing thought to go through my head.

I told you yesterday that I wanted you on this site how do you feel about that?'

Oh, this is getting silly, she loves you all the way, why me too. 'Why do you ask?' I want to know- 'why'- 'for I can...' he said. 'You seem nervous around other girls, yet not her or me- that works.' 'Do you want some?'

Of this all the time?' Sure- they say yes to me- he asks, and that amused, secret smile is back, of I have a blond and a dark-haired girl all at the same time... Yet would he be happy with just two? I ponder the thoughts even if he could hear them...

RICHARD C. MAST- He just grinds. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. Holy crap, that is personal, I thought- to I met yesterday and the right for me. She is not her girlfriend?' yah well see- when I do them both at the same time. I love this game... (thoughts she could not hear)

Katie- 'I find you intimidating.' 'There's nothing mysterious about me.'

I flush scarcely think about all I could have had him just sick it in me- I mean all the riches in the world, but mentally pat myself on the back for my candor, and gaze at my hands again. I hear his sharp intake of breath.

'It gives me some sort of inkling of what you might be thinking,' he breathes. 'You are a secret, 'You should find me intimidating,' he nods as I do you. 'You are very honest, and blunt- about what he wants and how he wants it.

'Please don't look down, at me and to that to me- it hurts,' I said to him, "why" why- I do not think you should- Why- it is for my taking; he said... and you cannot stop it... what are you going to do about it I run you- and thought you... I glance at him, and he gives me an encouraging but wry smile.'

Unsure feeling yet contented... in his arms.

19

I get up in the morning barking orders to my Echo Dot, and she is more than happy to do them all for me, like play music, and get the thing going for me when I do not want to be going.

I like to see your face.' I am just nervous around you, she said right?

Nope, you are not unlike any others I had... you are not the youngest either.

Oh... Me? Mysterious?

'I think you're very self-contained,' he murmurs.

Crap is what I said! 'Me, I had not realized I was so self-contained? 'Except when I was blushing, of course, which is often with someone like him. Have I offended you?' He sounds surprised. Not at all... I just wish I knew what you were blushing about.

He said you can feel safe with me.' 'Do you always make such personal annotations?' 'No,' I answer truthfully, to why yet I did not want to say it was all in my mind anyway. 'He is so-o good.' I thought...

He pops a small piece of blueberry muffin into my mouth and starts and I start to chew it slowly, and he goes for a kiss, odd yet sweet, not taking his eyes off me, as he pulled back for the kisses, and as if on the indication of the fact I was all his, and I blushed.

'I'm used to getting my way, Merry,' he murmurs. 'In all things.' This is not going the way I thought it was going to go. I cannot believe I am feeling so antagonistic towards him. It is like he is trying to warn me off. 'But you're very high-handed,' I retaliate quietly.

Why, haven't you asked me to call you by your first name?' I am surprised by my audacity. He raises his eyebrows at me and, if I am not mistaken by this or how I feel, he flushes slightly too, at the sight of me and what I was about to do to him- in fiery passion.

'I do not doubt it, was the fact that he was thinking about her, or thinking that it was wrong. Why, why has this conversation become so serious, in his mind about her? Has he fallen in love with just her... or is this his mind overthinking things?

The next day- I am with Merry- 'Are you into having a child?' He asks, sure, why do you want to do that now with me, I said back, it may be a plan if you want to do this. Is that I am for your breeder...?

He walked out of the room all mad! Whoa... he keeps changing my course of life. Yet, I am not going to say not- I am young, I do not know, um-a I what, or what I want to do. 'Tell me about your parents, they're not much to say other than my mom has done it all.' Why does he want to know this? Is it so dull, like a boy or a girl? The girl said.

Me- I thought that she is beautiful, my subconscious reminds me. I do not like the idea of me and Katie doing this, yet I do- I cannot help myself, I take a sip of my tea, and - eats another small piece of his muffin.

'My mom lives in Georgia with her new husband Bob. My stepdad lives in Montesano.'

‘Your father?’ ‘Yes, what about him- he not in my life now or ever- and I want to say that way.’ ‘My father dropped me when I was a baby.’ ‘I’m remorseful for bringing that up to you,’ he mumbles, and a fleeting bothered look a-crossed his face. ‘I do not ‘member him at all.’ ‘And your mother remarried?’

I snuffle, one time holding back the tears, of feeling lost out on. He frowns at me. ‘You could say that, but maybe it was for the best.’ So... I said to him looking down.

‘Neither are you.’ About having a dad- ‘yah...’ ‘You’re not giving much away, are you?’ ...As if, in deep thought, he says that in a wryly, was rubbing his chin. Holy shit, ‘you’ve interviewed me once already, why do you ask that... it’s okay for you to have your nose up my ass hole, and I can recollect some quite probing questions then, why do I.’ He smirks at me, saying I would do that next time then.

That is when I said that- ‘My mom is wonderful, yet I must be a grown-up at some point. She is an irredeemable romantic and have lost of boyfriend’s that like to skip out on her... she is currently on her fourth man this week.’ I like mom there only 7 times a week. You are more skank-ie than Katie. ‘You said that to your mom?’

‘Yep!’ He raises his eyebrows in surprise. I continue to say about how- ‘I miss her, she has them now, and like always someone is more than I.

Those lips.

Those hips.

Those...

Ah!

‘Do you have a good relationship with all of them then?’ I do not bother too.

She sees her own thing. ‘Of course, I thought- I just hope he can keep an eye on her and pick up the pieces when her harebrained schemes don’t go as planned.’

I grew up with all of them getting the best of her. I smile fondly at her- like was not important. I have not seen my mom for so long. RICHARD C. MAST is watching me intently, taking infrequent sips of his coffee, with more cream than dark roast. I really should not look at his mouth, long for a kiss, yet- I feel I need loving feelings. It is unsettling to think about my past that was just the night before or so it seems to me.

20

My life story, you know already by looking into my mind and using your brain- and this technology, you can see it all like a slide show just click to preview in a menu? ‘And what is he like, not bother by any of it not even the sick frapping in the night, scaring out Katie’s name?’ I have bested sometimes 63 times- in one day, I was masturbating to try to put off doing laundry. I ended up masturbating for 7 hours. I was incredibly raw and sore after, but- I guess I was 10 or so, yet I deserved it. ‘That is, it?’ - asks, surprised, you do not think that is wrong for a girl of that age to do that- he shrugged.

What does this man expect, her for you not too? I refrain from rolling my eyes at him, yet I could not help but squeeze him tighter, harder, and longer to understand all that is me. 'Why didn't you want to live with your mom...?' he asks... and before came out of my mouth, he saw it play out in his awareness of thoughts. I cannot help but blush, this is none of his business, yet he is making it be so he knows everything about me and so it is safe... it is like mind- rapping.

'Siblings...?' 'Yes, all girls 3.'

He could see them all the youngest no 10 or so... I do not keep up with them. There all own their own too. Yet it is the norm these days... and my little sister is in Paris, French dick suck of a boy that wants to use her up and dump her, yet that is what she wanted.' His eyes go cloud with irritation, on my mother's part- I said to him she fails, no? He does not want to talk about his family or himself, it all about me... yet I feel that it all the same.

'I hear Paris is lovely for young lovers why not let her- my mom said,' I murmur the quotes run past my mind too fast to not stop them. Why doesn't he want to talk about my family...?

'It is beautiful... that you have turned up as good as you did- he said. Have you been 'good' I can tell?' he asks, his exasperation with what he is digging for to be forgotten. It is not nice to ask about a girl past these days... I thought not even lovers... 'Paris?' I squeak never been- there.

‘You well...’ ‘Of course,’ I concede, saying let us do it now- yet is that too much to ask? He looks at me with eyes glittering in the low light with the moon full shining in the windows. ‘But it’s England that I’d like to visit.’ ‘Because, I was feeling gloomy, thinking about all that just sucks...’ He tilts his head to one side, running his index finger across his lower lip... saying sure. I blinked, and then I blinked, then I blinked ounces more hastily, so I blinked, like 3 times wildly in a chain-like of events.

I was snooping through your things in your mind. I see that you have written such a wonderful book that you do not think is good- yet I do.’ All this talk of literary greats reminds me that I should be studying for him to make him bigger than he is. I glance at my watch... saying commands for it does, in timely fashions. ‘I had better go... now- and get back- (I was at his home; it is huge and has 16 bedrooms or more and 4 baths.) I must study, I said, thank you for saying, that but you must not mean that. I love that, you love me like this.’ ‘For your exams?’ ‘Yes...’ ‘Okay, then you may go. ‘He said... - My mind is reeling with desire. The next day- the first question. ‘Do you always wear dresses?’ he asks unexpectedly. ‘Mostly.’ I spoke... in his ear softly. He nods, shaking his head up and down. The look he gives me and the warm fuzzy feeling going in and through me- I am completely blown away by it, I know- it is LOVE.

If you were unnoticed the sensation, you would never- ever know what might have taken place, and in many ways that were worse than finding out in the first place. Because if you were off the beam, you could go onward in your lifespan without ever- ever be holding back over your shoulder and conjecturing what might

have been- in the questions of what- if. And I aware that our time together is limited, even if where 'are always together, 'Do you have girlfriends other than her?' He blurts out.

Holy crap, why must he ask this- 'I don't.' - I just said that aloud also. I do not have the time for other girls only her... his lips quirk up in a semi-smile, showing, and he looks down at me with envy. Oh... what does that mean? He blocked me from reading his mind... to toy with me. I must try to reassemble my thoughts, yet this is his game. I must get away from him, for I do something to lose him...I walk forward, and I trip, stumbling headlong into the shitter- flush.

'Shit, Merry!' - He cries. 'Yes, yes it was a mouth full of it.'

21

Kiss me damn it! I inhale deeply, that is the feeling of love... you know.

I implore him, but I cannot move. 'Are you okay?' he whispers.

When she moves upwards when I insert into her. Feeling ever hitting thrust she moves with me. I am in your arms. Kiss me, please. He gazes at my hood, as he moves it about, I am paralyzed with a strange feeling of fast hart breathing that just takes over me, unfamiliar need to understand I let myself rush free, as he does with me, completely captivated by him, I feel it okay to spray him down.

He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, and gives me a small shake of his head as if in answer to my silent question, that was running in his mind- and that was

do you love me? YES! _ YES! _ FREAKING! _ YES! He is staring into my eyes when he opens his eyes again, it is with some new purpose, He tugs the hand that he is holding so hard that, I fall back against him, it all happens so-o fast, yet over and over - one minute I am falling, of the bed the next I bouncing, on my head, up-down and skidways' too, the next I am in his arms, and he is holding me tightly against his chest.

I am staring at RICHARD C. MAST -'s exquisitely sculptured mouth, mesmerized, and he is looking down at me, his eyes darkening. He is breathing harder than usual, and I have stopped breathing altogether. His thumb and I feel it in me, as he brushes my lower lip, and I hear his breath a glitch.

I inhale his dipping love, vital scent taking, like the slut he wants me to be- yet I am happy to be just that. He smells of freshly laundered sheets and some luxurious body-wash, come over me I did not even see that he has carried me into his shower room, I may have blacked out- from all hardcore loving.

I want to be kissed, right here I said- and he did. (I pointed you know where,) my kindness is drawn to his beautiful body- looking over the entirety. He has one arm around me, clasping me tight to him, while the fingers of his other hand softly trace my face, and around the place that every young girl was to have touched by a man like him, gently probing exploratory me. I hold his- nervous, burning gaze for a moment or it is persistently... but eventually, and for the first time in twenty-one years, I want to feel his mouth on me. I am not the man for you he said to Katie in his mind who was see it all,' he whispers.

What- is she doing looking in on us like this? Where is this coming from, you wanted me the other night? She said... in a fast way to him, Surely, I should be the judge of that, she thought, I frown think why I cannot have my moment with him, and my head swims with rejection- and that was felt all around- with us all.

I have 'royally screwed' I see him say to her... about all this... He has his hands on my shoulders, holding me at arm's length, watching my responses sensibly. And the only thing I can think of is that I wanted to be kissed, made it damned obvious, and he did not do it. He does not want me. He does not want me.

I am going to stand you up and let you go, we were my butt cheeks pressed against the glass window was doing like bunnies, as all the people looking in at us, in a hugging freaking stance,' he says quietly letting me down and off him, and he gently pushes me away, as it like he is slapping the shit out of himself.

(My mom thought it was something about a broken typewriter that was his grandpa's.) Yah- no! My soul screams as he pulls away, leaving me grieving, for him to feel me up to feel the hole. It like he spiked through my body, as I stand there, feeling him coming out of me.

I said to her- her being Katie... you make me feel safe. 'I've got this,' I breathe, finding my voice. 'Thank you for killing it for us through- why,' I mutter awash with humiliation, as the kids outside the glass point, at me and uncover body- yet that's how things are these days. How could I have misread the situation between us so utterly? I need to get away from her. I am glad to hear you say just that, he

whispered. He frowns at me in an anomalous way. He has not taken his hands off me, or his eyes. 'For keeping me,' I whisper- thank you- your everything I needed.

He does not want me- though Katie- why?

Then a million-thought rushed through my mind as to why not... I bet you could find them all no- can you?

22

'Thanks for doing the photoshoot and giving me all these nude photos of you to keep- I love them- you could justify it in a magazine with these, I will see that you do.

I shudder to think, my puss hole is going to be wide open on the cover, what could have happened to me, if daddy would see that- or mom. I am standing in front of him feeling like a fool. Um- wow- it just looks like a black hole yet boys love to look up it- (ah girl thoughts.) Yet for the money and him what?

Do you want to come and sit down in the room for a moment and see me edit these to enhance what you have going for you, looking them all over to pick with one well go on the cover- of Playboy- he bought them out back in 2019.'

He releases me, his hands, off my boobs, and the playing and they go down to his sides, his hand was on me pulling shoulder strap down, and well I shake know what comes next- it is more sex, you got it, I clear my mind some. All my vague, unarticulated hopes have been dashed, looking at myself this way- yet for him

anything. Outside the room, I turn briefly to face him, but cannot look him in the eye. With all the kids looking at me see me as the girl on the cover... it was that, fast there, I am on the big screens in the NY all nudes. Being naked this day is something we feel fee about doing... with cameras everywhere why not show it all and we do not care- if a 5-year-old sees it- they will understand soon enough...

What was I thinking too much? I admonish myself. My subconscious mocks me, I look around to see all of me- all over the place- I am the IT girl of the day. I never wanted that... I wrap my arms around myself- for Katie was happy for me and want to show love, and turn to face the road... to move on with my day, I quickly make my way across, conscious that - is behind me, I murmur, it is only for a month... I was inquiry my dumb thoughts.

She stops, and the anguish in his voice demands my attention, as she is running to me, with open arm, she there my true love has found me... she is always there for me even if I want to die a slow and painful death, overall, this shit, so I peer unwillingly up at me- and she said I love it- it- is, so you- she said. Her gray eyes are bleak, fast like only she can make them do- as she runs his hand through his hair.

Huh? Therefore, he looks so desolate; this is what he gets out of you? One girl said to me, at school the next day- holding up a hard copy of me- to all to see, yet I know they all have; I did not even blink- at her- as I was chowing on my pin- like a girl in 5th grade.

Once underneath the dark, cold concrete of the room with its bleak fluorescent light humming, I lean against the wall, before class and put my head in my hands, as I have now sat down for the teachings.

This is the big send-off, of the bell ringing out. Just to wish me luck on more tests, that have nothing to do with what I want to do in life.

-And-

Their Brad jerking off under the desk to my photo! Do not giggle, it is true! It seems like, um- that is okay for a-boys, yet not a girl these days... also, the girl next to me just got in trouble for it- yet boys can do anything for they' are known for it.

'Thanks: said the man teaching the class for the embraceable photography of a classmate- there Dee.' 'Um- well thank- thank you.' she said. I cannot disguise the sarcasm in my voice.

Saying: 'She is a good kid stop it!'

He meant it!

23

Unforbidden and annoying tears pool in my eyes. Thinking of all that has happened these past days, what has not- and what going to... What was not I thinking about it all?

I turned on my heel, on my left foot, for I was nervous, vaguely amazed, that I did not trip- I have a habit of falling on my face, yet that is just me.

I see him in my mind, without giving him a second glance, I disappear down the hall toward the bathroom, run yet I cannot get away when he is in my head always. Why am I crying over this? Drawing up my knees I see in a stall, I fold in on myself.

Grief is something that never was something- I could take, like with my dashed hopes, dreams, and soured outlooks. Placing my head on my knees, I let the irrational tears fall unrestrained. How ridiculous am I for doing such? I sink to the side of the shitter and meltdown, angry at myself for this senseless feedback- of feeling all types of love.

This ridiculous pain will be smaller the smaller I am if I do this... I have never been on the receiving end of rejection for my own doing, I want this- yet I do not- I do not know what I want- really- I do not. I want to make myself as small as possible. To just fade away from life. I am crying over the loss of something I never had, and that is my pride.

Okay... so I was always one of the last to be picked for basketball or volleyball - but I understood that - running and doing something else at the same time as bouncing or throwing a ball is not my thing. I am a solemn liability in any sporting field.

I am too pale, feeling and showing, like- passionately thinking in thoughts, though, I have never put myself out there, ever.

Her welcoming smile fades when she sees me. Analytically, I thought to stop! As he said to stop me with crossness in the voice of thought. I am sure neither of them has been found sobbing alone in dark places. I see Katie standing there to hold me. She drags me home with her arm around her one shoulder. I just need a good cry. A lifetime of insecurity I have had and, too skinny, too shabby, clumsy, my extensive list of faults goes on.

My subliminal is emblematically screaming at me, arms folded, leaning on one leg, then pitter-pattering her foot in frustration, (Five hours have passed...) Katie is sitting at the dining table on her laptop when I arrive. She asked: 'Marry what's wrong?'

'You've been crying,' She has an excellent gift for me being there all the time like she is now, just stating there. 'What did that bastard do to you?' She howls, and her face, jeez, she is scary. That is the problem, I should just be happy, and I am not sure if I know how to do that... why can't I?

'Nothing Katie is wrong with me other than what is wrong with me.' The thought brings an ironic smile to my face. 'Then I ask- why have you been crying?' 'Like- You never cry,' she says, her voice relaxing some as she continued taking. She puts her arms around me and hugs me for a side.

I have to say something; just to get her to back chest. She stands, her gray eyes brimming with concern, yet she feels that way about me all the time. ‘Nope, RICHARD C. MAST saved me,’ I whisper for being just like all of them that do not care. ‘Nonetheless, I was quite shaken by it, anyway.’ It was fine, nothing to worry about really.

‘Okay, he has more money than you, but then he has more money than most people in America! And you are not happy with that? He has everything-’ ‘What do you mean...? What are you trying to say?’ ‘Oh Katie, it’s obvious isn’t.’ I whirled around, to face her as she stood in the kitchen doorway, looking at me that way. ‘Merry! For heaven’s sake, how many times must I tell you? You are a total baby,’ she intersects me as I blabber. He likes you more than me... ‘oh don’t be silly.’

That is what this is all about.

‘Katie she just shrugs.

I need to study.’ I cut her short. She frowns and says that she cannot wait.

And she is holding me in her arms like a lover.

‘Katie, please, do not get mad at me for this- ‘never.’

Interval: 7 Chimera

(My days repeating)

This is what he meant, for me to do with my life be his... anytime he wants it-girl and nothing more and nothing less, and it makes his rejection easier to accept.... Yet, the money is why, like- I am here- and the love too... yah that...

I have been working on my studies more than them being with him or her... I would say it was to clear my head. I was looking over the paper that was said I wrote, I pretend to read the article, that Katie made for me. Beyond its suddenly, blindingly obvious. He is too gloriously good-looking, not to think about the non-stop. I know he loves me, yet he has a hard way of really showing just that.

I, understand, yet not so- her words make more sense than mine- I questioned this... He is not the man for me. I can live with this. It is only when I am in bed, that I try to sleep, that I allow my thoughts to drift off some- yet all the voices run through me- never hushing up.

Never slowing- never stopping, for me to have a moment- in time to think alone.

'Katie, she is particularly good,' 'I am going to study, is what I said to her... just wanted to get away from her mouth.' I am not going to think about him again, for now, I vow to myself, and opening my revision notes, I start to read. Thus far, his face keeps looking it to mine, and I see him looking back in the glass.

I put my pen down, which makes all the font that I write out and comforts it into text in word. I am finished, with my re-write of her draft.

My final exam is over, I said- this will do simply fine the grin spread over my face can be helped.

It is the first time all week that I have smiled over something other than him. It is Friday, and we shall be celebrating tonight, really celebrating.

Paris- with Katie not him, I need this- the city the lights the sound- of something other than me inquiry all that is me - and him.

She slanted her head and smiled at her companion, with grace seated her at the best table in the restaurant; her smile, at least, was honest, though almost nothing else about her was. The pale gray of her eyes was warmed to by sweet colored contact lenses; her blond hair had been darkened by the low light of the tower in the background, then subtly streaked with lighter shades. in her arms mentally begging her with every fiber of my being to kiss me, is what I needed, just her true love for me - not asking... never demanding.

He did not want me as a girlfriend, this week he was off doing what he does. I turn on to my side, now at the hotel, with her in the single bed, Frivolously, I wonder if he is with a new younger girl?

Think back of: 'Ah!' settled in his chair with a contented sigh, returning her smile. she is so beautiful woman in her teen years; she looks like the US, with glossy dark hair and liquid gray eyes, and a luxurious mouth.

(Bed)

I close my eyes and begin to drift, and she nudges me, groggy as I- she had gambled that he would not have his people dig any deeper than that, that he would run out of the patience required to wait for the answers before, she made a move on me. Her manufactured background was only a few layers deep; I knew she and I wanted too so why not; she had not had time to prepare more. He is saving himself. Well not for you, my sleepy subconscious has a final swipe at me before unleashing itself on my dreams.

I might even get drunk! I said- we can hear it is not agents the law here, I have never been drunk before, I know that the trill was wearing off, I glance across the sports hall at Katie, and she is still scribbling furiously, five minutes to the end of foolish. This is it, the end of my academic career if he tunes in...

She had done the best she could in the time she had, she knew that she would have to be off doing her study's even on this run over the sea that takes less than a day now.

He made a point of keeping himself in shape, and his hair had not yet started to gray-either that or he was as skilled as she at touch-ups. 'You look especially lovely tonight; have I told you that yet?' I shall never have to sit in rows of anxious, isolated students again. Inside I am doing graceful cartwheels around my head, knowing full well that is the only place I can do graceful cartwheels.

...And that night, I dream of her and I live long ever after, and I am running through dark places with eerie strip lighting doing things we should not, and I do not

know if I am running toward something, that I should want or not- the dream, leads me with choices, it is just not clear.

Katie stops writing and puts her pen down. She glances across at me, and I catch her Cheshire cat smile too. We head back to our apartment together in her Mercedes, refusing to discuss our final paper. Katie is more concerned about what she is going to wear to the bar this evening. I am busily fishing around in my purse for my keys.

‘Merry, there’s a package for you, their flowers from him...’ she said.

Odd, I have not ordered anything from Amazon recently.

Katie is standing on the steps up to the front door holding them.

‘No.’ Katie’s eyes are wide with disbelief. ‘-?’ I nod.

‘You have, she said, he loved you more than anything, I start to believe it.’ But then her gaze was warm, wet whit tears for she was in love with me more than he at that moment. I knew... she had trained long and hard to acquire it, I knew she was the one that would always care about me. ‘Thank you again... I said to him in a mind message.’ I recognize the quote was something slandered, where was the love in it?

I have not let myself dwell on RICHARD C. MAST - for the past week. Okay... so-o his blue eyes are still haunting my dreams, as she plays with me in them too, and I know it will take an eternity to expunge the feel of his arms around me and his wonderful perfume from my brain. Why has he sent me this?

‘Can’t think of anyone else, that would do this for me, like him though.’

‘What does this card mean...?’ ‘I have no inkling; it is a warning - scrupulously he keeps threatening me off, with gifts. I have no idea why- he thinks I will keep coming back- just for the coming.

It is not like I am beating his door down- and the wood hard- with only him.’ I frown some... ‘I know you do not want to talk about him, Merry, but he is seriously into you. Warnings or no.’ ‘I do not know, and I do not care. I cannot accept these from him, yet not feeling as I did in the past some of the caring went away.

This is what he meant, for me to do with my life be his... anytime he wants it-girl and nothing more and nothing less, and it makes his rejection easier to accept.... Yet, the money is why, like- I am here- and the love too... yah that... I have been working on my studies more than them being with him or her... I would say it was to clear my head. I was looking over the paper that was said I wrote, I pretend to read the article, that Katie made for me. Beyond its suddenly, blindingly obvious. He is too gloriously good-looking, not to think about the non-stop. I know he loves me, yet he has a hard way of really showing just that.

I, understand, yet not so- her words make more sense than mine- I questioned this... He is not the man for me. I can live with this.

It is only when I am in bed, that I try to sleep, that I allow my thoughts to drift off some- yet all the voices run through me- never hushing up. Never slowing- never stopping, for me to have a moment- in time to think alone.

‘Katie, she is particularly good,’ ‘I am going to study, is what I said to her... just wanted to get away from her mouth.’ I am not going to think about him again, for now, I vow to myself, and opening my revision notes, I start to read. Thus far, his face keeps looking it to mine, and I see him looking back in the glass.

I put my pen down, which makes all the font that I write out and comforts it into text in word. I am finished, with my re-write of her draft. My final exam is over, I said- this will do simply fine the grin spread over my face can be helped. It is the first time all week that I have smiled over something other than him. It is Friday, and we shall be celebrating tonight, really celebrating.

Paris- with Katie not him, I need this- the city the lights the sound- of something other than me inquiry all that is me - and him. She slanted her head and smiled at her companion, with grace seated her at the best table in the restaurant; her smile, at least, was honest, though almost nothing else about her was. The pale gray of her eyes was warmed to by sweet colored contact lenses; her blond hair had been darkened by the low light of the tower in the background, then subtly streaked with lighter shades. in her arms mentally begging her with every fiber of my being to kiss me, is what I needed, just her true love for me - not asking... never demanding.

He did not want me as a girlfriend, this week he was off doing what he does. I turn on to my side, now at the hotel, with her in the single bed, Frivolously, I wonder if he is with a new younger girl?

Think back of: ‘Ah!’ settled in his chair with a contented sigh, returning her smile. she is so beautiful woman in her teen years; she looks like the US, with glossy dark hair and liquid gray eyes, and a luxurious mouth.

(Bed)

I close my eyes and begin to drift, and she nudges me, groggy as I- she had gambled that he would not have his people dig any deeper than that, that he would run out of the patience required to wait for the answers before, she made a move on me. Her manufactured background was only a few layers deep; I knew she and I wanted too so why not; she had not had time to prepare more. He is saving himself. Well not for you, my sleepy subconscious has a final swipe at me before unleashing itself on my dreams.

I might even get drunk! I said- we can hear it is not agents the law here, I have never been drunk before, I know that the trill was wearing off, I glance across the sports hall at Katie, and she is still scribbling furiously, five minutes to the end of foolish. This is it, the end of my academic career if he tunes in...

She had done the best she could in the time she had, she knew that she would have to be off doing her study’s even on this run over the sea that takes less than a day now.

He made a point of keeping himself in shape, and his hair had not yet started to gray-either that or he was as skilled as she at touch-ups. ‘You look especially lovely tonight; have I told you that yet?’ I shall never have to sit in rows of

anxious, isolated students again. Inside I am doing graceful cartwheels around my head, knowing full well that is the only place I can do graceful cartwheels.

...And that night, I dream of her and I live long ever after, and I am running through dark places with eerie strip lighting doing things we should not, and I do not know if I am running toward something, that I should want or not- the dream, leads me with choices, it is just not clear.

Katie stops writing and puts her pen down. She glances across at me, and I catch her Cheshire cat smile too. We head back to our apartment together in her Mercedes, refusing to discuss our final paper. Katie is more concerned about what she is going to wear to the bar this evening. I am busily fishing around in my purse for my keys.

‘Merry, there’s a package for you, their flowers from him...’ she said.

Odd, I have not ordered anything from Amazon recently.

Katie is standing on the steps up to the front door holding them.

‘No.’ Katie’s eyes are wide with disbelief. ‘-?’ I nod and smile sheepishly.

‘You have, she said, he loved you more than anything, I start to believe it.’ But then her gaze was warm, wet whit tears for she was in love with me more than he at that moment. I knew... she had trained long and hard to acquire it, I knew she was the one that would always care about me. ‘Thank you again... I said to him in a mind message.’ I recognize the quote was something slandered, where was the love in it?

I have not let myself dwell on RICHARD C. MAST - for the past week. Okay... so his blue eyes are still haunting my dreams, as she plays with me in them too, and I know it will take an eternity to expunge the feel of his arms around me and his wonderful perfume from my brain. Why has he sent me this?

‘Can’t think of anyone else, that would do this for me, like him though.’
‘What does this card mean...?’ ‘I have no inkling; it is a warning - scrupulously he keeps threatening me off, with gifts. I have no idea why- he thinks I will keep coming back- just for the coming.

It is not like I am beating his door down- and the wood hard- with only him.’
I frown some... ‘I know you do not want to talk about him, Merry, but he is seriously into you. Warnings or no.’ ‘I do not know, and I do not care. I cannot accept these from him, yet not feeling as I did in the past some of the caring went away.

2

I love Katie, she is so loyal and supportive. I repack the books and leave them on the dining table. Katie hands me a glass of champagne.

‘To the end of exams and our new life in Seattle,’ she grins.

‘To the end of exams, our new life in Seattle, and excellent results.’ We clink glasses and drink.

The bar is loud and hectic, full of soon to be graduates out to get trashed. José joins us. He will not graduate for another year, but he is in the mood to party and

gets us into the spirit of our newfound freedom by buying a pitcher of margaritas for us all. As I down my fifth, I know this is not a clever idea on top of the champagne.

‘So, what now Merry?’ She shouts at me over the noise, Katie has the constitution of a she-ass. ‘That is doubtful,’ she calmly replied. ‘I have never liked any wine.’ She had made that plain from the start, who disliked the taste of wine, I thought sitting over here looking at her thinking that. Her taste buds were deplorably working-class. She enjoyed a glass of wine, (I thought) now she is drinking only coffee or bottled water; order coffee for her, of that... I giggle.

‘I think I’d better have a beer.’

‘I’ll get us a pitcher.’

‘More drink, Merry!’

Katie bellows...

‘Classy- in France?’

Sure!

Her eyes for Katie, are glittery and wet for her. I move out of her way to hold and get up from our table. She is taking photos, yes, of her in her tight jeans, her usual stunning self, and high heels, hair piled high with tendrils hanging down softly around her face. I giggled over it like I have no idea what the time is, I will wake with her over to the tower and well go up and kiss at the top. Good thinking, Merry. I stagger off through the crowd, she yells for me, and I whisper in her mind that I am

over here. Of course, there is a line, but at least it is moving fast to the top. I am suppressing a drunken smile, hit me like an involuntary, looking out over with her in my arms and the kiss.

Back at the hotel my head, ponding so-o... I go for a swim uncomfortably in a G-string bikini, with all the others, a lot of kids but even so, it was nice, Well, the object of the exercise was to get drunk, on it is the other way 'round. I have succeeded, in working it off. I stare blankly over and over in a fast way- at the poster on the back of the toilet door that extols the virtues of safe sex.

Yah- NO! like that is going to happen.

Holy crap'n piss bucket, did I just call RICHARD C. MAST in my mind? Shit. My phone rings for him it is all in my mind though, and it makes me jump when he says 'what do you want.' I squeak in surprise; by how the man he is being to me for what see to be noted on my own doing.

This is what it is like - not an experience to be repeated.

The line has moved, and it is now my turn.

'Howdy,' I bleat timidly into the handset. I had not calculated on this.

'I'm coming to get you,' he says and hangs up... before I said I did want him too. The only RICHARD C. MAST - could sound so calm and so threatening at the same time. I pull my jeans up after the poster said not to do what I just did.

My heart is thumping. Coming to get me? Well, I am coming to get her- ha. Hang on, I am fine. Oh no. I am going to be sick... no... He is just messing with my head.

I said- 'Holy freaking crap nugget.'

3

He cannot find me here, I would say so with GPS within my body as we all have now, Besides, it will take him 4 hours to get here from NY, and we will be long gone by then. I wash my hands and check my face in the mirror.

I love Katie, she is so loyal and supportive. I repack the books and leave them on the dining table. Katie hands me a glass of champagne.

'To the end of exams and our new life in NY,' she grins.

'To the end of exams, our new life in NY, and excellent results.' We clink glasses and drink.

The bar is loud and hectic, full of soon to be graduates out to get trashed. José joins us. He will not graduate for another year, but he is in the- mood to party and gets us into the spirit of our newfound freedom by buying a pitcher of margaritas for us all. As I down my fifth, I know this is not a clever idea on top of the champagne.

'So, what now Merry?' She shouts at me over the noise, Katie has the constitution of a she-ass. 'That is doubtful,' she calmly replied. 'I have never liked any wine.' She had made that plain from the start, who disliked the taste of wine, I thought

sitting over here looking at her thinking that. Her taste buds were deplorably working-class. She enjoyed a glass of wine, (I thought) now she is drinking only coffee or bottled water; order coffee for her, of that... I giggle.

‘I think I’d better have a beer.’

‘I’ll get us a pitcher.’

‘More drink, Merry!’

Katie bellows...

‘Classy- in France?’

Sure!

Her eyes for Katie, are glittery and wet for her. I move out of her way to hold and get up from our table. She is taking photos, yes, of her in her tight jeans, her usual stunning self, and high heels, hair piled high with tendrils hanging down softly around her face. I giggled over it like I have no idea what the time is, I will wake with her over to the tower and well go up and kiss at the top. Good thinking, Merry. I stagger off through the crowd, she yells for me, and I whisper in her mind that I am over here. Of course, there is a line, but at least it is moving fast to the top. I am suppressing a drunken smile, hit me like an involuntary, looking out over with her in my arms and the kiss.

Back at the hotel my head, ponding so-o... I go for a swim comfortably this time, with all the others, a lot of kids but even so it was nice, Well, the object of the

exercise was to get drunk, on it is the other way 'round. I have succeeded, in working it off. I stare blankly over and over in a fast way- at the poster on the back of the toilet door that extols the virtues of safe sex.

Yah- NO! like that is going to happen.

Holy crap'n piss bucket, did I just call RICHARD C. MAST in my mind? Shit. My phone rings for him it is all in my mind though, and it makes me jump when he says 'what do you want.' I squeak in surprise; by how the man he is being to me for what see to be noted on my own doing.

This is what it is like - not an experience to be repeated. The line has moved, and it is now my turn.

'Howdy,' I bleat timidly into the handset. I had not calculated on this.

'I'm coming to get you,' he says and hangs up... before I said I did want him too. The only RICHARD C. MAST - could sound so calm and so threatening at the same time. I pull my jeans up after the poster said not to do what I just did.

My heart is thumping. Coming to get me? Well, I am coming to get her- ha.

Hang on, I am fine. Oh no. I am going to be sick... no... He is just messing with my head.

I said- 'Holy freaking crap nugget.'

I for one looked flushed and slightly unfocused. He cannot find me here, I would say so with GPS within my body as we all have now, 'You've been gone so long.' Katie reprimands me. Besides, it will take him 4 hours to get here from NY, and we will be long gone by then. I wash my hands and check my face in the mirror. 'Where were you?' I wait at the bar for what feels like an eternity for the pitcher of beer and eventually return to the table. 'The girl's room on a call, that I shouldn't have made.' Mind dealing- I said... 'ah- were sitting out said at a bar café. 'All- out-in the - fresh air- and yes.' 'Katie, I think I had better think that you and I have a thing... 'Merry, you are such a softie with him- grow some lady nuts and say- freak you.'

4

'I'll be five- to ten minutes...'

'...Going to flick-the-bean-?'

'Yep!' said Katie in understanding, with a sarcastic thumbs up!

At first, my trusty ally as always is my hairbrush like a girl wanting to always look good. By day I used it to brush my hair, and at the night, on the rug, face on the floor, ass in the air, skirt pushed up, I run my fingers just down the long place where the insides of your thighs touch, all the way to your knees, and then I'd let go of your legs, and they'd fall slightly apart, and as my hands started to move up inside them, with my fingers splayed wide, they'd move farther and farther apart, and then I'd lift your knees and hook them over the arms of the armchair, and pass my fingertips down over your breasts and your stomach and just lightly, back and forth,

moving closer and closer to where your thighs meet; f*ck yourself, you'll have so-o much fun!

Nails ripping methodically at sheer taupe pantyhose it took her easily twenty minutes to put on, I must get nude- and I do not care. The little inconvenience that she must have been wet without knowing it as a woman. Slow, rhythmic, gentle, moving down my body, down and I was nothing but my body. Just the sweetness the incredible... I could feel her muscles moving softly, coming was more in my mind still; when I got ever-so closer- I would become a single band of muscle, shaking without a thought of mind behind it, flickering and curving to every moment, current tugging at herself harder, moving just right- toward the flood in which was to come.

And, by night I rode the handle of that grooming item like a limitless pounding hot sex man of my dreams, doubling its functionalities at a stroke. Two very separate lives this brush has just like myself. Multi-tasking is an important thing for me.

Always with the disguise. Two very separate lives- indeed more than okay, beautiful, and natural. Longer a concern was thoughts, into my field of vision now coming back, draining it- with an exhaustive gaze- of relief, which sought to extract from it a female creature. I run my easily my belly it is all done. The forefinger touches the clitoris while the left forefinger goes deep inside, get what was left in out, fingers surrounded by those soft, collapsing caves of flesh and girlie-goo THICK AND CLEAR BUT SOMETIMES STRINGY, my finger is too small. I put in two

and spreads them... She moves her fingers to that rhythm again for time two, feeling the two inside get creamy and the clitoris dipping in and out gets hard and pink.

Then squirting into the many sprays all over the floor or running's into the butt hole covered with a heart-shaped (S) 7*2.8 CM beginner butt plug in red gemstone and shiny Stainless steel- of the thickness of my girlie goo. The chair was at an odd angle as she got up to clean... and move on with her day.

5

I make my way through the crowd another time, thinking of how I was going to get off like three more times, in 15. I am beginning to feel nauseous, my head is spinning uncomfortably, see in the little girl in the open stall next to me get there faster then I! and she is like freaking 10! and I am a little unsteady with my frapping 3 figuring or have girl gotten even more slutty. More unsteady than usual, she got it down. God, I turn on- you? No- nope...? ...Did not think so prev. 'I think I've just had a bit too much to drink, I feel like more pee than that is coming out of me.' I smile weakly at her and say- GOD FOR YOU HUNNY- good for you.

'And you too,' she murmurs, and her dark eyes are watching me intently, saying why you doing this on your own at your age... is a young girl thing to do.' Do you need a hand?' she asks and steps closer undies at her feet, putting her arm around me some. I have this.' I try and push her away weakly, of age, yet there nothing wrong with it. 'Merry, please,' she whispers, it is Kate in my head saying do not do it, yet the

young child is holding me in her arms, pulling me close, like a lover. These days' free love is love! No matter the age...

6

'You know I like you, Merry, please.' He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head. Holy freak... he is going to kiss me. Her hand has slipped into my hair, and she is holding me.

She whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet- of candy and Kool-Aid. She gently kisses me along my jaw, and lips and moves up to the side of my mouth and then right on my parted lips. I feel frightened, drunk, and out of control, yet I love having free love like this- it like I was her age all over. The feeling is sickly sweet.

You are my friend, no and for life, I said to her, and I think, I am going to throw up, so you should runoff. A voice in the dark says quietly. Holy shit!

In my mind- RICHARD C. MAST- he is now, see what I have done.

I glance anxiously up at the RICHARD C. MAST. He is glowering at Katie, and he is furious, like me for doing a young one as he said. Crap'n, and fly trap-My stomach hauls, and I double over, worse than when blood is shooting out of my hole, I will hold you.'

She grabs my hair and pulls it out of the firing line- my body no longer able to accept the alcohol, and I vomit outstandingly on to the ground at me and the little French girls' feet her name was- Willow.

She has her arms around my middle body - holding my hair in a makeshift ponytail down my back so it is off my face, her hands the other is I try awkwardly to push her hair out of the way, but I vomit again... and again, even on to her half nude body.

Even when my stomach's empty, and nothing is coming up, oh shit... 'If you are going to throw up again, I note, with deep thankfulness, that it is in relative darkness. I vow silently that I will never drink again, yet that like say I cannot have a day without sex. It is going down in me at some point.

My hands are resting on the block wall... How long is this going to last? I questioned... she takes her T stands, and I wipe my mouth, on she said she did not care... love at first sight... I questioned it. This is just too appalling for words, Katie said... I must go out now. So-o horrifying gasping heaves of wackiness- my body feels. Then it concludes... Katie is still hovering by the entrance to the girl's room watching us.

Her (the young girl's) hand is barely holding me up – vomiting profusely is exhausting. takes his hands off I say to him- I am hectic with embarrassment repulsed with me. When I come around. My hands in on my head I groan, as I place them there. Like that was the solitary worst moment of my lifespan. Twins taking a crap is what I

think of at this moment- why I do not know. Oh- yeah- I do- there they are both doing just that- like- looking in at me over in there apparent 5,00 feet up or so all glass too. What should I say to him, for him to forgive this?

RICHARD C. MAST's rejection will not be something good. I try to remember a worse one, that I have done, and I cannot. I glare at him, in my mind. For he is acting like my dad, not my lover. Oh, the humiliation... my mother was far worse. Marry who are you kidding, he is just seen you hurl all over the ground- nothing more said- Katie, she feels that what I did was nothing. Yet I still look shamefaced to myself, and him- or so I think.

'You know I like you, Merry, please.' He has one hand at the small of my back holding me against him, the other at my chin tipping back my head.

Holy freak... he is going to kiss me. Her hand has slipped into my hair, and she is holding me.

She whispers against my lips. His breath is soft and smells too sweet- of candy and Kool-Aid. She gently kisses me along my jaw, and lips and movies up to the side of my mouth and then right on my parted lips. I feel frightened, drunk, and out of control, yet I love having fee love like this- it like I was her age all over. The feeling is sickly sweet.

You are my friend, no and for life, I said to her, and I think, I am going to throw up, so you should runoff. A voice in the dark says quietly. Holy shit!

In my mind- RICHARD C. MAST- he is now, see what I have done.

I glance anxiously up at RICHARD C. MAST. He is glowering at Katie, and he is furious, like me for doing a young one as he said. 'Crap'n, fly trap-My stomach hauls, and I double over, worse than when blood is shooting out of my hole, I will hold you.'

She grabs my hair and pulls it out of the firing line- my body no longer able to accept the alcohol, and I vomit outstandingly on to the ground at me and the little French girls' feet her name was- Willow.

She has her arms around my middle body - holding my hair in a makeshift ponytail down my back so it is off my face, her hands the other is I try awkwardly to push her hair out of the way, but I vomit again... and again, even on to her half nude body.

Even when my stomach's empty, and nothing is coming up, oh shit... 'If you are going to throw up again, I note, with deep thankfulness, that it is in relative darkness. I vow silently that I will never drink again, yet that like say I cannot have a day without sex. It is going down in me at some point.

My hands are resting on the block wall... How long is this going to last? I questioned... she takes her T stands, and I wipe my mouth, on she said she did not care... love at first sight... I questioned it. This is just too appalling for words, Katie said... I must go out now. So-o horrifying gasping heaves of wackiness- my body

feels. Then it concludes... Katie is still hovering by the entrance to the girl's room watching us.

Her (the young girl's) hand is barely holding me up – vomiting profusely is exhausting. takes his hands off I say to him- I am hectic with embarrassment repulsed with me. When I come around. My hands in on my head I groan, as I place them there. Like that was the solitary worst moment of my lifespan. Twins taking a crap is what I think of at this moment- why I do not know. Oh- yeah- I do- there they are both doing just that- like- looking in at me over in there apparent 5,00 feet up or so all glass too. What should I say to him, for him to forgive this?

RICHARD C. MAST's rejection will not be something good. I try to remember a worse one, that I have done, and I cannot. I glare at him, in my mind. For he is acting like my dad, not my lover. Oh, the humiliation... my mother was far worse. Marry who are you kidding, he is just seen you hurl all over the ground- nothing more said- Katie, she feels that what I did was nothing. Yet I still look shamefaced to myself, and him- or so I think.

7

I have a few choice words for my so-called friend, none of which I can repeat in front of RICHARD C. MAST - There is no disguising your lack of ladylike behavior, and I can only produce- and this is so, so many shades darker in terms of, I risk a glance at him, I see hem looking back at me mirrored back in my stare.

He is staring down at me, his face composed, yet he can help but fall for me fast, giving nothing away about how he was feeling about what I did we fall.

Turning, I glance at Katie whom and, like me, is scared by the true filling that he heads to me from that day. I utter, staring at the handkerchief which I am furiously worrying with my fingers. It is so soft, and worm, as slid his fingers in her, he would expect her to share his bed tonight, but he was destined to be disappointed once again, in her saying: I do not feel the need after, soloing- so many times today. Her hatred was so strong she had barely been able to force herself to let him kiss her and accept his touch with some temperateness.

There was no way in hell like she had let him do more than that to her tonight- for the movies running in her had of him acting like an ass and or like her dad. 'I am sorry, he said for what I have done to you. Just in my thoughts of...' Apologize... and say back off. Katie mutters, derogatory but we both ignore that, and he slinks off back into the of my mind for rest and sleep.

I am on my own with doing me- and just Kate.

'We've all been here, perchance not quite as dramatically as you,' he says dryly. 'It is about knowing your limits, Merry. I mean, I am all for pushing limits, but this is beyond the pale. My head rings with excess alcohol and frustration. Do you make a habit of this kind of behavior?'

He was scolding me like an errant child, something you would never do to me I said to Kate that had me held by the butt, arching my back as she is holding me in

her arms, for passion and cute kissing- then 69, her butt in my face, I move her lips around using sucking at mouth and teeth and tongue.

Katie- Put her legs over your shoulders and grab onto her waist or open her vagina. (The last one feels better) or have her butt hole in your well- nose.

Do not fart!

And at first kiss outside her vagina and then slowly lick her inside and just pretend she is the most beautiful thing you have ever tasted and if she wants to talk dirty to her but talks to her about that beforehand so she will not be offended.

Hope this helps.

I love it. It is such a turn on.

- You want to kiss/nibble on her neck first. It is an effective way to start-turning her on.

Suck on her nipples and play with them with your tongue. This too is another great turn on.

- While you are doing these, massage her PUSS-PUSS over her pants-just to get her ready for it.

- Work your way down, slowly, and sexually.

- Open up her PUS*Y and go straight to the Cl*t.

- Smack the PUS*Y with your tongue fast, and suck and tug on

it (not too hard though.)

- As you are sucking her PUS*Y, slide your fingers in and out of her-vagina opening.

- Once you have 2 fingers in there, and they are facing up, curve them-like a hook and without going in and out, stroke her G-spot.

If this is your first time, beware of the smell and taste, as it makes most guys gag at first.

Part of me wants to say, if I want to get drunk every night like this, then it is my decision and nothing to do with him - but I am not brave enough. Not now that I have thrown up in front of him. Why is he still standing there?

‘No,’ I said contritely. ‘I’ve never been drunk before and right now I have no desire to ever be again.’ Yet, I know that is a lie... ‘Come on, I’ll take you home,’ she murmurs- do this to me.

I just do not understand why he is here. I begin to feel faint. She notices my dizziness and grabs me before I fall and hoists me into his arms, holding me close to her chest like a child. For sucking and seizing on her nipples. ‘I need you, Katie.’ Holy Moses, I say at C-*-M! I am in her arms again. Where I do the same to her butt in the air, I go for it for like a half-hour.

‘Dancing,’ with Katie in the club she shouts, and I can tell he is mad at me acting slutty. He is eyeing me- him the RICHARD C. MAST suspiciously.

I struggle with my black jacket and place my small shoulder bag over my head, so it sits at my hip. I am ready to go, once I have seen Katie; to party my ass off... yet he is saying NO... No in my mind. And I just having fun. It is earsplitting, packed, and the music is underway, thus there is a huge mass on the dance floor. She sets me down, and, taking my hand, leads me back into the bar.

She knew that I went out for some air- of him... embarrassed weak I feel dumb, and still drunk, exhausted, ashamed, and on some strange equal unquestionably off the scale electrified, by the cocktail of things I took down.

He is clutching my hand I see them all wavy to my sight. Looking at them all swirly. - Such a confusing array of emotions play tricks in my mind like haunted school girl ghosts. I will need at least a week to process them all, I knew even in this state of mind of senseless.

Katie is not at our table, and Katie has disappeared. Levi looks lost and forlorn on his own. ‘Where’s Katie? She was off with some young girl doing what I did the night before.’ I see that she had to feel as I did... she was always like that with me... we must be the same in all-or not...! ‘My head is beginning to pound in time to the thumping bass line of the music.’

‘Dancing,’ with Katie in the club she shouts, and I can tell he is mad at me acting slutty. He is eyeing me- him the RICHARD C. MAST suspiciously.

I struggle with my black jacket and place my small shoulder bag over my head, so it sits at my hip. I am ready to go, once I have seen Katie; to party my ass off... yet he is saying NO... No in my mind. And I just having fun. It is earsplitting, packed, and the music is underway, thus there is a huge mass on the dance floor. She sets me down, and, taking my hand, leads me back into the bar.

She knew that I went out for some air- of him... embarrassed weak I feel dumb, and still drunk, exhausted, ashamed, and on some strange equal unquestionably off the scale electrified, by the cocktail of things I took down.

He is clutching my hand I see them all wavy to my sight. Looking at them all swirly. - Such a confusing array of emotions, play tricks in my mind like haunted school girl ghosts. I will need at least a week to process them all, I knew even in this state of mind of senseless.

Katie is not at our table, and Katie has disappeared. She looks lost and forlorn on her own. ‘Where’s Katie? She was off with some young girl doing what I did the night before.’ I see that she had to feel as I did... she was always like that with me... we must be the same in all-or not...! ‘My head is beginning to pound in time to the thumping bass line of the music.’

He rolls his eyes at me and takes my hand again and leads me to the bar. He is served immediately.

‘She’s on the dance floor,’ I touch RICHARD C. MAST’s arm and lean up and shout in his ear, brushing his hair with my nose, smelling his clean, fresh smell. All those forbidden, unfamiliar feelings that I have tried to deny surface and run amok through my drained body. I flush, and somewhere deep, deep down my muscles clench deliciously. He is such a - Control-Freak - I said to her- saying: your just having fun. He is watching me intently, mirrored in my- lost young girl like the look of my eyes.

‘Drink- Drink- drink’ I heard her say, to this young girl in the bar and she was about 14,’ he shouts his order at me. He looks irritated and livid, with me like I am his sex- dolly, and nothing more...He is so overbearing, I thought. Give me love- I thought- or is sex now just the love?

What is his delinquent? The moving lights are meandering and turning in time to the music casting strange colored light and obscurities all over the bar and the business.

He is alternately white, green, blue, and bloodshot red.

There a dead girl in an ash box sitting on the ground, on the walkway to my home, she was just burnt a day go, and dumped, here, and this is where she is resting- no one cares about her like death and dumping ash that nothing- or that she was only 5 years of age...I take a hesitant swallow; I think about the life she never had- on like all the others thoughts going through my mind I care.

‘All of it,’ he shouts.

I sway slightly, and he puts his hand on my shoulder to steady me. Um- Merry... are you ever going to live this down, and say she slipped away? She was my sister girl- and mom and they just dump her off... to be kicked by passing feet- yah but that is what they do these days- girl.

Cemeteries are wasted spaces of land, why do that when you need to construct things in that space. There is nothing left to remember her by- nothing by the memories in my mind of whom she was.

It makes me feel queasy, as I look in the box 3 x 6-inch books and see nothing but blackened asks... blowing some in the wind of the high walkways... in the glowing tingling light of the smoggy covered skyline. I notice this thought of what she was wearing the last time that I saw her, a blur though- wearing; a loose white linen shirt, snug jeans, playing in the park on the roof of the high-rise, pink converse sneakers, and a pink and white jacket, I would know I see a flick in some of the ash hitting my face as dust in the wind.

He rolls his eyes at me and takes my hand again and leads me to the bar. He is served immediately.

'She's on the dance floor,' I touch RICHARD C. MAST's arm and lean up and shout in his ear, brushing his hair with my nose, smelling his clean, fresh smell. All those forbidden, unfamiliar feelings that I have tried to deny surface and run amok through my drained body. I flush, and somewhere deep, deep down my muscles clench deliciously. He is such a - Control-Freak - I said to her- saying: your just

having fun. He is watching me intently, mirrored in my- lost young girl like the look of my eyes.

‘Drink- Drink- drink’ I heard her say, to this young girl in the bar and she was about 14,’ he shouts his order at me. He looks irritated and livid, with me like I am his sex- dolly, and nothing more...He is so overbearing, I thought. Give me love- I thought- or is sex now just the love? What is his delinquent? The moving lights are meandering and turning in time to the music casting strange colored light and obscurities all over the bar and the business.

He is alternately white, green, blue, and bloodshot red.

There a dead girl in an ash box sitting on the ground, on the walkway to my home, she was just burnt a day go, and dumped, here, and this is where she is resting- no one cares about her like death and dumping ash that nothing- or that she was only 5 years of age... I take a hesitant swallow; I think about the life she never had- on like all the other thoughts going through my mind I care.

‘All of it,’ shouts in my head- like the way she passed- by some killing her for the dollar in her underwire where she keeps and for the young rape.

I sway slightly, and he puts his hand on my shoulder to steady me.

Um- Merry... are you ever going to live this down, and say she slipped away? She was my sister girl- and mom and they just dump her off... to be kicked by passing feet- yah but that is what they do these days- girl.

Cemeteries are wasted spaces of land, why do that when you need to construct things in that space. There is nothing left to remember her by- nothing by the memories in my mind of whom she was.

It makes me feel queasy, as I look in the box 3 x 6-inch books and see nothing but blackened asks... blowing some in the wand of the high walkways... in the glowing tingling light of the smoggy covered skyline. I notice this thought of what she was wearing the last time that I saw her, a blur though- wearing; a loose white linen shirt, snug jeans, playing in the park on the roof of the high-rise, pink converse sneakers, and a pink and white jacket, I would know I see a flick in some of the ash hitting my face as dust in the wind.

Now in bed sleeping pills at my side, taking the glass from me, she places them for me- so sweet. Her shirt is unbuttoned at the top, and I see a sprinkling skin coming at me- and I out... then just to see her ass in my face... when I come to it, in my groggy frame of mind, she looks delicious.

9

He takes my hand once more. Holy cow - he is leading me onto the dance floor. Shit. I do not dance. He can sense my reluctance, and under the colored lights, I can see his amused, slightly sardonic smile. He gives my hand a sharp tug, and I am in his arms again, and he starts to move, taking me with him.

Boy, he can dance, and I cannot believe that I am following him step for step. It is because I am drunk that I can keep up. He is holding me tight against him,

his body against mine... if he were not clutching me so tightly, I am sure I would swoon at his feet. In the back of my mind, my mother's often recited warning comes to me: Never trust a man who can dance.

I investigated him/ his daily thoughts and what he did, just to see that he was with a 15-year-old-, not me- saying- 'Such a tight pussy- so tight and young-and small and the sucking oh so tight it is letting are out the sides. - he said as I see that he was with a new girl named- Nataliee.

I just was modified...Really likes she likes someone, I gasp. Katie is making her moves go in her mind for me of her hook up, she had with her new friend. She is dancing her ass off, and she only ever does that if she likes someone. It means there will be three of us for breakfast tomorrow morning. Katie! Outside and inside my head pounding away, loud. I cannot hear what he says, I tuned it out... it was my wishes. I cannot tell the color under the pulsating to all the heat of the flashing lights going off, is the day starting a new.

I Katie- curly blonde hair, and light, wickedly gleaming eyes.

Me- She pulls me into her arms, where she is more than happy to be...

Katie!

But I never- ever got to talk to her, the girl she had last night- I had to meet her. A new day is all the same- until the night-RICHARD C. MAST propels us off the dance floor in double-quick time. Is she okay? She said- she is not you- though. I need

to do the safe sex lecture, for the school, the teacher I know is a lezbo, but yes...she loves me.

I can see where things are heading for her and him, In the back of my mind, I hope she reads one of the posters on the back of the toilet doors. My thoughts crash through my brain, fighting the drunk, fuzzy feeling. It is so warm in here, so loud, so colorful - too bright. My head begins to swim with so many thoughts of him and her, and her and then him- and what she did- he did- and what I did with all, oh no... The last thing I hear beforehand, I pass out in RICHARD C. MAST'S arms is his harsh description. It is incredibly quiet, I am comfortable and warm, the light is muted, in this bed. 'Freak!' I open my eyes, Hmm... I am tranquil for a moment.

'This looks bigger than I remember,' I said to him- by this time I have a lust for him so- that I need him- oh so much. Oh so...! It is oddly familiar to me yet all-new the love only he can give- odd like only she can too as a girl- and he a boy. I have no idea where I am, halfway in the night- I come to it and see I am in his bed nude, and he going down on me, lovingly hard! I am enjoying the strange unfamiliar surroundings, of him just work- work- working it! Where? ...? ... Where am I? My confused brain struggles over its recent painterly memories.

Holy crap- I said- like that is carp the is holy- said Katie in my mind... ha funny. I am a hotel he owns in Atlantic City. ...In a suite- I see him coming to me, ready for loving making, As I did the last time, we were together, he loves it when I spray all over his face, as he loves doing to me as well! I have stood in a room like this

with Katie. Oh shit. I am in RICHARD C. MAST'S suite. This room is worth more than the then-White House- and some of those places that why do not care about- How did I get here?

10

I questioned... memories of the previous night come slowly back to haunt me, like my sister young life coming to end fast over someone, that did not love her just for hot young sex. She never had a boy toy. Nothing dead at 5! Holy shit. No socks...No jeans... I see this photo of her playing- where she was just being a kid-I see the first time she cum-med, on her little bed, it was the same night- she found out she was going to have to not see me any longer- so Katie showed her to be happy- I glance at the bedside night table- and see her face on the screen that movies the photos. I do not remember coming here. I am wearing my t-shirt, bra, and panties. I FEEL Broken- The drinking, oh no the drinking, the handset call, oh no the phone call, the vomiting, oh no the vomiting. Katie and then RICHARD C. MAST. Oh no. I cringe inwardly.

The orange juice tastes heavenly, it is I sit up and take the tablets. On it is a glass of orange juice and two tablets. Advil. He is such a Control freak that he is, he thinks of the whole thing. I do not feel that bad, much healthier than I merit too. Dehydration quenching and invigorating. Nothing beats freshly squeezed orange juice for refreshing a parched mouth.

How are you feeling?' 'Improved better than I earned,' I gabble.

‘How did I get here?’ My voice is small, contrite.

Do not worry about it he said- fast.

Followed by: ‘Good morning Merry. I peek up at him, I for one, like- feel like a two-year-old, if I close my eyes when I am not here. There is a knock on the door, for it to open. RICHARD C. MAST’S sweat; the notion does odd things to me. My heart leaps into my mouth, and I cannot seem to find my voice, to say come in. He opens the door anyway and strolls in, being all sweet. Holy hell, he has been working out, in tight shorts that show off his backside.

He comes and sits down on the edge of the bed, way, off, like his hair, blowing in the wind as the doors were open to the cityscape. Sweat, hard I take a deep breath and close my eyes, I cannot bear to look at the cheat any longer. He is staring at me, blue bright eyes, and as usual, I have no idea what he is thinking, even if it is run hard in my mind of all the facts. He is close- enough for me to touch, for me to smell, of him to be overpowering- and I want him- oh no- YES, do I want him!

The bath towel, in his hand, was thrown over my eyes and tied around my head. He hides his thoughts and feelings so well. Grasps is let out of me for he has me around his lower waist, going in for it like a dog in heat. Like I am his sex toy that is a rag doll pounding, I wriggle hard and slam down hard. He even takes me from behind over the chair without me giving the okay- I was all his- and then in bed, then in the shower! And I look down and see that I am shaved pinned against the glass! Oh my... ‘Did you put me to bed clean I don’t remember all this?’ you got me this night top?

His face is blank.

‘Yes!’

Um- it was an intoxicating cocktail- ‘After you passed out, that he gave me last night my little girl down under is still red- and I can walk- so much better than a margarita, I was out in la-la- land- and I do remember the hardcore FREAKING! and now I can speak from experience, this man goes in hard and deep.

‘Did I throw up again?’ My voice is quieter. Do not worry about getting pregnant I have taken care of that too... with this. An implant was placed by a doctor last night when you were passed out- do not thank me!

Do not say anything- do not even think about it- it for your good.

Um- is all I got out before his index finger hashed me- up to my lips.

‘Did you undress me?’ I whispered...

‘Funny you cute- that’s the least of your worries!’ He spoke.

Um...?

I thought...!

I think too much...?

He is right...?

Or is this wrong...?